

St. James United Church

A Community of Friends in Faith



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.

This bulletin is dedicated in loving memory of
Bethany Danielle Pike
Remembering Bethany's birthday on January 8th
Love Stephen, Susan, and Rebecca

January 9, 2022, First Sunday after Epiphany

Leading Worship: Rev. James Ravenscroft
Organist: Bob Rose; Music Leadership: Jean Rose

We Come to Worship

MUSICAL PRELUDE

WELCOME: *We extend greetings in Inuktitut, Cantonese and Igbo.*

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.

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 36:5-10)

One: We have come to sing praise to God, whose love reaches to the heavens,

All: and whose justice stands firm like the mountains!

One: We have come trusting that God's love will be ever steadfast,

All: that we can seek refuge in the shelter of God's wings!

One: We have come to feast at the table of God's holy wisdom,

All: knowing that here our thirst will be quenched at the fountain of life!

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN: "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" *Voices United* 101

1. Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus Christ, to you we raise,
manifested by the star,
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in your birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to you addressed
God in flesh made manifest.

2. Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding-guest
in your Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine:
anthems be to you addressed
God in flesh made manifest.

3. Manifest in making whole
palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight,
quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will,
ever bringing good from ill:
anthems be to you addressed
God in flesh made manifest.

4. Grant us grace to see you, Lord,
mirrored in your holy Word;
with your grace our lives endow,
grace to imitate you now,
that we like to you may be
at your great epiphany;
anthems be to you addressed
God in flesh made manifest.

We Share

OUR LIFE AND WORK

We acknowledge the connection between our work and our worship as we take time to 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 *(in unison)*

God of Abundant Grace, we give thanks for the many ways we share in the blessing of your love, each of us called to extend that same blessing into the world.

We give thanks as well for the blessing of this congregation, a spiritual family where we can grow in your goodness and share what we have received for the care of others.

Bless then the gifts of this community, that they may be used in service of your reign of love.

We pray in the name of Jesus, your Beloved Son and Mary's child. Amen.

SOLO: "Born in the Night, Mary's Child"

We Listen

TIME OF CENTERING

We listen to a singing bowl, preparing our hearts to receive the day's readings.

READINGS: Isaiah 62:1-5
John 2:1-11

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

READING: Excerpt from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard

MESSAGE: "A Final Epiphany"

HYMN: "In the Darkness Shines the Splendour" *Voices United 92*

1. In the darkness shines the splendour
of the Word who took our flesh,
welcoming, in love's surrender,
death's dark shadow at his creche.
Bearing every human story,
Word made flesh reveals his glory.

2. Light of nations, veiled in history,
born of woman's flesh and blood,
calling to the depths of mystery restless
hearts that seek the good.
Healing every human story,
Word made flesh reveals his glory.

3. Broken bread, sustaining us in sorrow,
wine poured out to toast our joy;
exodus and new tomorrow,
life's full promise to enjoy!
Gladdening every human story,
Word made flesh reveals his glory.

4. All God's people, sing in jubilation
of the birth that sets us free,
telling of the revelation:
Jesus, God's epiphany.
Celebrate the human story!
Word made flesh reveals our glory.

We Respond

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Open your hearts.

All: We gladly open them to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: It is good to give our thanks and praise.

Gracious God, it is good to give thanks, for you have always been, creative and creating, sharing your hope-filled love with all that is. Within the darkness of an unborn universe, you dwelt in eternal possibility. But then you spoke your Word and all of time and space sprang into light and life. In the embrace of your creative love, you brought to birth shining suns and awesome planets, the life-light of blue-green earth, blessed with abundant life.

But that was not the end of your speaking. In many places and cultures, you shared your wisdom, including with your people Israel, calling them into covenant, and blessed with Torah, commissioning them to be a light of peace to all nations. With gratitude for the many ways you have entered into covenant with us, we join the whole company of heaven in singing your glory:

All: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might. Heaven and earth all full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in God's name. Hosanna in the highest.

Then, Redeeming God, you spoke once more to a young woman named Mary, giving life to the dreams of your prophets in the birth of her blessed child Jesus. Ever an epiphany of your grace, he spoke your Word in everything he did, revealed your reign of inclusive love in all that he said. Then, on the night before he died, Jesus sat at table with his friends. He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them saying, "This is my body, given for you." Likewise, he took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to them saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you do this, remember me."

Remembering his birth and baptism, affirming his life and ministry, proclaiming his death and resurrection, we give voice to your mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Enlivening God, as we continue to celebrate his memory, we honour your abiding presence with us. Open our hearts to your Spirit with us and in this meal. As the gifts of bread and wine are for us a sharing in Christ, so may we grow in his likeness, living expressions of your Word. Nourished by this sacred meal, may we be sent out, both blessed and a blessing, proclaiming your wisdom and peace with our words and our lives.

Holy One we give you praise: Through Your Word made flesh, in the power of your life-giving Spirit, all glory is yours eternal God forever and ever.

All: Amen.

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, 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.

SHARING IN COMMUNION

I invite you to pick up the bread before you.

We share the bread of life, a gift of hope for all. (*Everyone eats their piece of bread.*)

I invite you to pick up your cup.

We share the fruit of the vine, a promise of love for all. (*Everyone drinks their wine or juice.*)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (*in unison*)

God of grace and goodness, we celebrate the gift of your love made known in Jesus, a love extended to every nation and people.

May this meal strengthen us to bear the gift of his love to the world.

We pray in the name of Jesus-Emmanuel. Amen.

We Leave to Serve

HYMN: "Take My Life and Let It Be" *Voices United 506*

1 Take my life and let it be
consecrated, all for thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2 Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love,
take my feet, and let them be
swift and purposeful for thee.

3 Take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee;

take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.

4 Take my will, and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.

5 Take my love: and I will pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

BENEDICTION

MUSICAL POSTLUDE

St. James United Church

Lead Minister:
Youth/Christian Education Minister:
Minister Emeritus:
Acting Music Director:
Associate Music Director:
Technology Support:
Office Administrator:
Church Custodian:

James Ravenscroft, OM
Susan Sheppard, DLM
Rev. Dr. Donovan Brown
Bob Rose
Alba Chen
Jake Thompson
Tracy Bishop
Bruce Winsor