

St. James United Church

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

A Gathering to Celebrate our Affirming Ministry



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.

**A Gathering to Celebrate our Affirming Ministry
March 13, 2022**

Presiders: James Ravenscroft, OM; Susan Sheppard, DLM
Guest Preacher: Rev. Dr. Bob K. Fillier
Music Leaders: Amy Dalziel, David Malone, Glenda Winsor,
Hannah Sheppard, and Susan Sheppard

We Come to Celebrate

MUSICAL PRELUDE

INTRODUCTION, WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

RESPONSIVE WELCOME:

One: We come together today to celebrate what it means to follow Jesus.

All: Which means taking seriously his example of compassion and love.

One: Which means we aren't really church unless there is space for everyone.

All: And everyone means absolutely everyone, with no exceptions!

HYMN: "Here All Belong" (G. Vosper; tune: "Here I Am Lord")

Truth be told, we're not alone: we have built ourselves a home;
built it large, and built it free – love was our goal.

This, a home for anyone, creed or custom, barring none.

This, a place where love can grow – here all belong.

Refrain: May we find here, what we're seeking.

May we share the strength to carry on.

May the love here do the healing,

lift our hearts, and make us all as one.

Truth be told, we cannot be whole without diversity.

many different voices raised create the song.

Whether brown or black or white, all together, we are light;

any-gendered, any-loved – here all belong.

Refrain: May we find here, what we're seeking.

May we share the strength to carry on.

May the love here do the healing,

lift our hearts, and make us all as one.

Truth be told, when gathered here, we can all our sorrows bear,
held in hearts made strong by love; we shall not fail.

Aged wisdom, questing youth, all connected, seeking truth,

altogether, each inspires – here all belong.

Refrain: May we find here, what we're seeking.

May we share the strength to carry on.

***May the love here do the healing,
lift our hearts, and make us all as one.***

CALL TO WORSHIP *(based on the colours of the Pride flag)*

One: We gather today in celebration, affirming the worth and goodness of all.

All: We celebrate and affirm the gift of life in all its diversity and colour.

One: We gather with awareness of the deep hurt many LGBTQ+ people carry.

All: We open ourselves to the healing that comes with true welcome.

One: We gather seeking the promise of love and the possibility of new life.

All: We come, each called to be a gift of warmth and light in the world.

One: We gather with gratitude for the world around us.

All: We are all strands of one web of creation, each a gift to the whole.

One: We gather with anxiousness for a world that is divided and in conflict.

All: We gather knowing that true harmony begins with each one here.

One: We gather with openness to the gift of this day.

All: We gather as one rainbow, united in the Spirit of love and peace for all.

OPENING PRAYER

We Listen

ANTHEM: “Born This Way” (St. John’s Gay Men’s Chorus via video)

A TIME FOR ALL AGES

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

READINGS: Matthew 15:21-28;

An excerpt from Wade Kelly’s *Names Will Never Hurt Me*

MESSAGE: Rev. Dr. Bob K. Fillier

We Respond

HYMN: “My Love Colours Outside the Lines” *More Voices* 138

1. My love colours outside the lines,
exploring paths that few could ever find;
and takes me into places
where I’ve never been before,
and opens doors to worlds outside the lines.

Refrain:

**We’ll never walk on water if we’re not prepared to drown,
body and soul need a soaking from time to time.
And we’ll never move the gravestones if we’re not prepared to die,
and realize there are worlds outside the lines.**

2. My Lord colours outside the lines,
turns wounds to blessings, water into wine;

And takes me into places where I've never been before
and opens doors to worlds outside the lines. **R**

3. My soul longs to colour outside the lines,
tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine;
I want to walk beyond the boundaries where I've never been before,
throw open doors to worlds outside the lines. **R**

AFFIRMING OUR VISION STATEMENT IN 7 VOICES

1: The people of St. James United Church are eternal seekers who value diversity within our congregation, our city and all of society.

2: We affirm each person's uniqueness and believe that all persons deserve to be valued, treated with equity and respected.

3: We are all children of God, walking many paths of spirituality.

All: 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.

4: Guided by the teachings of Jesus, we embrace all persons, regardless of...

5: creed, race, age, ability, economic status,

6: cultural and ethnic background, gender identity and sexual orientation

7: or any other difference that has led to marginalization or oppression.

All: We are committed to being an Affirming Ministry. We realize that this is a learning and growing experience and ask for God's guidance as we travel this road.

CELEBRATING BECOMING AN AFFIRMING MINISTRY

A certificate recognizing St. James United Church's new status as an Affirming Ministry is presented by Jill Handrigan representing Affirm United.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE AND SUPPORT

Hannah Sheppard, Katie Vardy and Chelsea Skanes (Present and Past Chairs of the SJUC Diversity Committee) offer remarks and receive words of congratulations and encouragement from other Affirming Ministries in Atlantic Canada.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We take time to pray for the needs of our global and local communities.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

(adapted from the Lord's prayer for Transgender Awareness)

Our Mother and Father, our Beloved Parent, in whom we move and breathe and have our being, the hallowing of your name shines forth in the diversity of your children. May your peace and love, justice and equality, inclusion and belonging reign here on earth as in heaven. Grant that the varied needs of all your people might be truly met, and they may find a loving community to belong to and call their own. Forgive us for the ways we have failed others, as we forgive those who might have failed us. Lead us away from the temptation to be complacent in the face of injustice. But instead give us courage to stand up and stand with all your beloved children. For your love and justice is to be made manifest now and forever. Amen.

We Leave in Hope

HYMN: "Draw the Circle Wide" *More Voices* 145

Refrain: Draw the circle wide.

Draw it wider still.

**Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side,
draw the circle wide.**

1. God the still-point of the circle,
round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms.

2. Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call. Open every door.

3. Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

One: As we go forth from here, may we

All: be strong in spirit, courageous in will, and gentle of heart.

One: Each day may our actions

All: be rooted in wisdom, nurtured by hope and open to love.

One: May we meet others as we would wish to be met:

All: with a heart of compassion, in a spirit of healing, and grounded in 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