

* If you are able, please stand where asterisk is shown.



St. James United Church

An Affirming Ministry

Centre for Faith, Arts & Multiculturalism

**Black History Month / Welcome Albert Mohr,
Giving Sunday Campaign Kickoff**

Weekly Service Bulletin – February 1st, 2026

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More Info: affirmunited.ca • united-church.ca •

**Please rise in body or spirit*

PRELUDE / WELCOME AND LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH / INTROIT

WE GATHER

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Iris Muir

“We respectfully acknowledge that St. James is located on the Treaty 20 Michi Saagiig territory and in the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations, which include: Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Alderville, Scugog Island, Rama, Beausoleil, and Georgina Island First Nations.

Our St. James congregation respectfully acknowledges that these Nations are the stewards and caretakers of these lands and waters, and that they continue to maintain this responsibility to ensure their health and integrity for generations to come.”

Curve Lake First Nation Land Acknowledgement (adapted slightly for use)

CALL TO ACTION

Cora Muir

*A Land Acknowledgement is a single act of reconciliation. As an Affirming Ministry that is part of the United Church of Canada, we commit to learning from, listening to and supporting Indigenous people. One way we can do this is through the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action**.*

Call to Action #22

We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.

LIGHTING OF THE JESUS CANDLE

Maeve O'Neill

One: We light the Jesus candle as a symbol of his love shining in the world.

All: We light the Jesus candle knowing that we are called to share this love.

One: We light the Jesus candle and commit ourselves to work for a world that is more just, equal and caring - where we live in right relations.

(The Jesus candle is lit.)

*GATHERING SONG

Over My Head

MV#88 vs. 1,2,4

This is a traditional African-American spiritual that is about the hope that was felt by people trying to escape slavery via the "Underground Railroad". It is intended to be sung slowly and freely.

Words and music: African-American spiritual; French trans. Denise Soulodre, 2006 Arrangement: Stephen Lee, 2006. Reprinted with permission under CCLI License No. 1918298. All rights reserved.

Refrain:

Over my head, I hear music in the air. Over my head, I hear music in the air.

Over my head, I hear music in the air. There must be a God somewhere.

1. When the storms of life are ragin' I hear music in the air.
When the storms of life are ragin' I hear music in the air.
When the storms of life are ragin' I hear music in the air.
There must be a God somewhere. **R**
2. When the winds of strife are blowin' I hear music in the air.
When the winds of strife are blowin' I hear music in the air.
When the winds of strife are blowin' I hear music in the air.
There must be a God somewhere. **R**
4. O Jesus is a-callin' I hear music in the air.
O Jesus is a-callin' I hear music in the air.
O Jesus is a-callin' I hear music in the air.
There must be a God somewhere. **R**

CALL TO CELEBRATION *Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me (responsive)*

Howard Thurman, from "Meditations of the Heart" (*Adapted slightly for use at St. James United Church)

Thurman who was born in 1899 and raised in the segregated South. He is recognized as one of the great spiritual leaders of the 20th century renowned for his reflections on humanity and our relationship with God. Thurman was a prolific author (writing at least 20 books); perhaps the most famous is Jesus and the Disinherited (1949), which deeply influenced Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.

One: Open unto us, light for our shadows

All: Open unto us, courage for our fear

One: Open unto us, hope for our despair

All: Open unto us, peace for our turmoil

One: Open unto us, joy for our sorrow

All: Open unto us, strength for our weakness

One: Open unto us, wisdom for our confusion

All: Open unto us, tenderness for our toughness

One: Open unto us, love for our hate

All: Open unto us, Thy Self for ourselves

One: Lord, Lord, open unto us!

All: Amen.

OPENING PRAYER (responsive)

Church of England Resources for Black History Month (adapted for use at St. James United Church)

One: Compassionate God, who sent Jesus
to deliver us from all manner of injustices and inequalities,

**All: create in us new hearts and enlarged visions,
to see the image of God in every person
irrespective of any perceived differences.**

One: May we be generous in our love of others
as we work towards ending misunderstanding, racism and injustice,
**All: creating communities of human flourishing,
through Jesus our friend and our mentor.**

One: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison – paraphrase, author unknown)

Loving God, in whom is heaven, may Your name be honored everywhere.

May Your kin-dom come.

May the desire of your heart for the world be done,
in us, by us and through us.

Give us the bread we need for each day.

Forgive us. Enable us to forgive others.

Keep us from all anxiety and fear.

For your power comes from love which is
forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN *He's Got the Whole World In His Hands

A traditional African American Spiritual thought to have been written by Obie Philpot. Public Domain

He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the itty-bitty baby in His hands, He's got the itty-bitty baby in His hands
He's got the itty-bitty baby in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got a-you and me brother in His hands, He's got a-you and me brother in His hands
He's got a-you and me brother in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got a-you and me sister in His hands, He's got a-you and me sister in His hands
He's got a-you and me sister in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands.

THEME CONVERSATION *Quilt of Belonging: A Canadian Quilt Project*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4a0ibrSg4o>

CHILDREN'S PRAYER

Jesus, you are the light of the world. Fill my mind with your peace,
and my heart with your love. Amen.

WE REFLECT

POEM *Hymn to Freedom (music and lyrics, Oscar Peterson)*

Jim Fairs

ANTHEM

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 25:31-40

Jim Fairs

³¹ “When the Son of humankind comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’

*HYMN

Standin' In the Need of Prayer

An African American spiritual, and, like many folk songs, its origin is unknown. Both text and tune became well known after their publication in The Book of American Negro Spirituals (1925), compiled by James Weldon Johnson and his brother, Rosamond Johnson. Public Domain

1. Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord
Standin' in the need of prayer;
Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord
Standin' in the need of prayer.

Refrain:

**It's me, it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer;
It's me, it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer.**

2. Not the preacher, not the deacon, but it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer;
Not the preacher, not the deacon, but it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer. R
3. Not my father, not my mother, but it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer;
Not my father, not my mother, but it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer.
4. Not the stranger, not my neighbor, but it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer;
Not the stranger, not my neighbor, but it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer. R

REFLECTION

OFFERING AND OFFERTORY MUSIC

*SUNG OFFERTORY RESPONSE *What Can I Do?*

MV#191

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What can I do? What can I bring?

I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.

What can I say? What can I sing?

I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *(responsive)*

One: Faithful God, we give thanks that we are known and cherished by you.

We give thanks that we have been called to go into the world to share your good news of joy, hope, peace and equality.

All: Lead us we pray.

One: You call us to love and be loved as we work to end racism and all forms of prejudice and inequality in our own lives, in our community and in the world.

All: Help us we pray.

One: We come in humility asking for courage and wisdom as we share your dream for the world.

All: Hear us we pray.

One: You create us in your image and called us to be unique. Sometimes it feels difficult to be who we truly are.

All: Help us we pray.

One: We pray for courage to stand up against any injustice.

All: Strengthen us, we pray.

One: We pray for the world we live in...

All: We offer the prayers of our hearts in a moment of silence...

One: Hear our prayers,

All: and in your love, answer. Amen.

WE GO FORTH

*HYMN

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

This spiritual refers to the Underground Railroad, an informal organization who helped many slaves to flee. "Swing low, sweet chariot" refers to Ripley, a "station" of the Underground Railroad, where fugitive slaves were welcome. This town is atop a hill, by Ohio River, which is not easy to cross. So, to reach this place, fugitives had to wait for help coming from the hill.

Public Domain

Refrain:

Swing low, sweet chariot, Coming for to carry me home

Swing low, sweet chariot, Coming for to carry me home

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,

Coming for to carry me home

A band of angels coming after me,

Coming for to carry me home. R

Refrain:

Swing low, sweet chariot, Coming for to carry me home
Swing low, sweet chariot, Coming for to carry me home

If you get there before I do,
Coming for to carry me home
Tell all my friends I'm coming, too,
Coming for to carry me home **R**

I'm sometimes up and sometimes down,
Coming for to carry me home
But still my soul feels heavenly bound,
Coming for to carry me home **R**

If I get there before you do,
Coming for to carry me home
I'll cut a hole and pull you through,
Coming for to carry me home **R**

***BLESSING** *(responsive)*

One: In a world where people are enslaved and dehumanized,

All: we go to treat each person with dignity and respect.

One: In a world where profit is valued more than human life,

All: we go to proclaim the priceless worth of each person.

One: In a world where the devastation of racism and prejudice is found,

All: we go to show that love conquers.

One: Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the vulnerable; honour everyone;
and the blessing of God be with us now and always.

All: Amen.

***SUNG BLESSING**

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

VU#575 vs. 1&4

Words: African-American spiritual. Music: African-American spiritual. Arrangement: © 1987 Estate of Wendell Whalum, c/o Mrs. Clarie G. Whalum, 2439 Greenwood Circle, East Point, GA 30344, USA. Used by permission.

1. I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
4. I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

POSTLUDE