



St. James United Church

An Affirming Ministry

Worship Leader: Lynda Parker

Weekly Service Bulletin – May 4th, 2025

221 Romaine St, Peterborough, ON K9J 2C3 • 705-742-2222 • stjamesunitedchurch.ca

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

***Please rise in body or in 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)

*GATHERING SONG

In the Bulb

VU#703

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1. In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.
2. There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.
3. In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Maeve O'Neill

Dora White, **Easter Gathering, 2021** (adapted for use at St. James United Church)

CALL TO CELEBRATION *(responsive)*

One: God is in you.

All: And also in you!

One: We have come together to worship and pray,

All: to feel God's presence in a personal way.

One: There is sacred text to receive; gifts of music and praise.

All: We are ready to learn; we have hearts to raise.

One: We are filled with the potential of a seed freshly sown.

All: New life and new growth is our song.

Jani Francis - Pentecost 1 2023, adapted for use at St. James United Church

OPENING PRAYER *(responsive)*

One: Loving God, be with us today. Wrap us in your love. Help us to feel your warmth.

All: We welcome the warmth of God's love.

One: Like the sun that does its work happily every day, help us to spread your kingdom message of love, equality and peace.

All: We delight in sharing the warmth of God's love.

One: When we feel tired or discouraged, be the breeze that pushes us onward. Help happiness and gratitude to shine from us, for we know that...

All: God's love is warmth, a warmth we want to share.

One: We pray in Jesus' name, and we sing a paraphrase of his prayer together...

Heather Tober - Pentecost 1, 2023, adapted for use at St. James United Church

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(A paraphrase - spoken in unison)*

VU#916

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 echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come to 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, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, 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.

***HYMN**

Amazing Grace

VU#266

Words: John Henry Newton; (v 5) anonymous from A Collection of Sacred Ballads. Inuktitut translation: Information sought. Chinese translation: © 1977 Chinese Christian Literature Council Ltd., 140 Austin Road, 14/F., Surson Commercial Bldg., Kowloon, Hong Kong. Fax: 2739-6030. Chinese transliteration: © 1995 Christopher Cheung, 26 Araman Dr., Scarborough, ON M1T 2P6. Japanese translation: © Sambika Committee, United Church of Christ in Japan, 2-3-18 Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo 169, Japan. Japanese transliteration: © Haruo Aihara, 93 Ridge Hill Dr., Toronto, ON M6C 2J7. Music: from Virginia Harmony. Adapted and harmonized by Edwin O. Excell. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A- 723161. All rights reserved.

1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me, this word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
5. When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

THEME CONVERSATION Pay it Forward – 2015, Mythmakerone

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3ld9_p2bS0

CHILDREN'S PRAYER Catholic Agency for Overseas Development 2020

Loving God, help us to work together, to share what we have,
So that everyone has what they need.

Help us to build a better world,

Where each of us becomes the best person we can be. Amen.

WE REFLECT

ANTHEM

GOSPEL READING

Acts 9: 36-39

Joanne Rorke

³⁶ Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." ³⁹ So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. ⁴² This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

HYMN

Come to My Heart

VU#661

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1. Come to my heart, Lord Jesus; teach me to walk in your way.
Come to my heart, Lord Jesus; come to my heart today.
Give me the peace and joy that only you can bring.
Come to my heart, Lord Jesus; give me a song to sing.
2. Fill me with love, Lord Jesus; teach me to walk in your way.
Fill me with love, Lord Jesus; fill me with love today.
Give me the peace and joy that only you can bring.
Fill me with love, Lord Jesus; give me a song to sing.
3. Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus; teach me to walk in your way.
Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus; Answer my prayer today.
Give me the peace and joy that only you can bring.
Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus; give me a song to sing.

REFLECTION

You were all given a button when you came in this morning. First, I want to read a story by Sandy Warner.

She writes "The Mystery of Buttons"

I remember as a child climbing the huge staircase at my great grandparents' home and finding my way into my great grandmother's sewing room. It was so tiny, probably like a small walk-in closet today. She had organized drawers of nifty things. My favorite was her button drawer. I loved to run my fingers through them and touch them.

Now that I am a gramma and recently organized my sewing drawers, I suddenly had a download of what those buttons meant to my great grandmother. It takes years and years to collect that many buttons that come off old, discarded garments and new sewing projects. It is usually not until one becomes a gramma that one receives the promotion of so many buttons!

How many of you have a button jar or drawer, or your mothers button jar? My mum had this tin, and a jar filled with coloured buttons.

In our spiritual language, what do buttons represent? Buttons are like an anchor, sometimes to hold onto. But what? Somehow the "power" of a button closes the breach between two pieces of garments. It is a potent mystery. Does the hole in the garment grab onto the button? Does the button grab onto the nothingness in the hole? How then, do the two connect?

I have often been in difficult places where I have felt like a round peg in a square hole. I have even had a vision of my being there. And I, like the rest of those round peg/square holed people, say the same thing. "Lord, I don't fit here"!

It is when I think back on the mystery of the button that I finally understand. Any seamstress knows how to make a buttonhole. You sew a short skinny rectangle the length of the button and then cut a slit down it's middle. This is the parable of the round button in a square hole. It is exactly the differences between the two shapes that allow them to connect and hold together.

So, if you feel like you are a round peg stuck in a square hole, remember that God has a purpose for you right where you are. You are the spiritual anchor that is standing in the gap, uniting what is divided into one.

I continued to see a round peg and a square hole many times last night. I heard: my purposes for you are unique.

I was drawn to look up the night i saw the re-occurring vision of the round peg and the square hole. I was very surprised to read it in hindsight. Four days after that vision I was released from a very long intersession. Sometimes letting go is extreme sacrifice. It can be heart wrenching. But if it is the right thing to do, God will fill the gap - maybe with a square peg that has been waiting to find its niche.

Now as I ponder that time, I look back at the treasures filling in my memory box of beautiful sacrificial buttons. Some of these buttons will never be used again on earth. Yet I know in heaven, each one of those buttons are real jewels. God remembers our tears, our prayers and stretching times when we held on until we were ripping apart inside between the tension of two poles. He never forgets and he always rewards.

Josh 4:7 and these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever. Amen.

Buttons symbolize protection or good luck. They can also represent opening or closing, such as opening doors to new opportunities or closing doors to the past.

In the scripture reading, Dorcas is portrayed as a person that helped others. I bet she had a button jar!

Now, take out your button. Feel it's hardness. Think of the people who are going through hard times. Ask God to help them.

Buttons are used to fasten clothes together. Ask God to bring together people who have fallen out and moved apart from each other. Pray that he will bring peace.

Look at your button and see how many holes it has. Think of that number of things you would like to say thank you to God for and say thank you prayers.

Look at the colour of the button and say thank you to God for something that is that colour.

Look around and see if someone has the same colour of button as you. You might want to say thank you to God for families. Ask God to bless them and help them to live together and to love each other.

Look around and see someone who has a different button to you - it could be different in shape, size, or colour. Thank God for making everyone different and giving us all different gifts.

Pray for those who have different buttons.

Buttons symbolize protection or good luck. They can also represent opening or closing, such as opening doors to new opportunities or closing doors to the past.

Keep your button if you wish, and let it remind you that, yes, we are going through changing times, and things will be different, but God will be with us, guiding us on new and exciting adventures.

Let us pray: Lord, help me to live from faith to faith, trusting you in every area of my life. Teach me to choose faith over fear and experience your faithfulness in all things. Amen.

WE RESPOND

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? What can I say? What can I sing?

I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer. I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

WE GO FORTH

HYMN

Travel On, Travel On

VU#647 vs. 1,2,4

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1. Travel on, travel on, there's a spirit that is flowing,
a spirit that is flowing night and day.
Travel on, travel on, with the spirit that is flowing,
the spirit will be with us all the way.
Travel on, travel on, with the river that is flowing,
the spirit will be with us all the way.
2. Travel on, travel on, there's a spirit that is growing,
the spirit grows like flowers night and day.
Travel on, travel on, with the spirit that is growing,
the spirit will be with us all the way.
Travel on, travel on, with the flower that is growing,
the spirit will be with us all the way.
4. In the kingdom of heaven is our end and our beginning,
the road we must travel every day.
Travel on, travel on, to the kingdom that is coming,
the kingdom will be with us all the way.
Travel on, travel on, to the kingdom that is coming,
the kingdom will be with us all the way.

*BLESSING

*SUNG BLESSING

You Shall Go Out with Joy

VU#884

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You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace;
the mountains and the hills will break forth before you;
there'll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field
will clap, will clap their hands!

And all the trees of the field will clap their hands (clap, clap),
the trees of the field will clap their hands (clap, clap),
the trees of the field will clap their hands (clap, clap)
while you go out with joy.

POSTLUDE