

Quispamsis United Church

April 18th, 2021 - The Third Sunday of Easter

Presider: Rev. Richard Bowley

Music Director & Hymn Leader: Stephen Alexander

Reader: Sally Allanach

Centering Passage: *Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.*

-Luke 23:34a, 46

Welcome

Acknowledgement of Territories

Celebrations & Announcements

GATHERING TOGETHER

Lighting the Christ Candle

This is our light on the way, our encouragement in the dark, our partner when we are lost and alone. Let us follow this light as we strive to follow Christ together.

Prelude Be Still, My Soul - arr. Harold DeCou

Greeting (Responsive):

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Call to Worship (Responsive):

We come this day seeking God's Word

but not to possess it, not to hide it,

not to change it, not to use it to abuse others.

We seek God's Word to be transformed by it.

So let us open our hearts as we enter this time,

that God's Word can become a part of us.

Prayer of Approach

Holy Spirit, who moves in and through us as easily as the wind through the trees, we long for your revelatory power to work in our lives as we hear the Word and seek our purpose. Inspire a deeper understanding of the faith of Christ's first followers that we might follow that example, and share our faith with others. We long to live as Christ did, with love and compassion for all, and ultimately to follow as he did the Word of God. Move in this time. Move in us. This we pray in the strong name of the Risen Christ. AMEN

Hymn: Today we all are called to be Disciples VU 507 (1, 3, & 4)

1 Today we all are called to be
disciples of the Lord,
to help to set the captive free,
make ploughshare out of sword,
to feed the hungry, quench their thirst,
make love and peace our fast,
to serve the poor and homeless first,
our ease and comfort last.

3 Pray justice may come rolling down
as in a mighty stream,
with righteousness in field and town
to cleanse us and redeem.
For God is longing to restore
an earth where conflicts cease,
a world that was created for
a harmony of peace.

4 May we in service to our God
act out the living Word,
and walk the road the saints have trod
till all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we
give thanks in one accord
to God who calls us all to be
disciples of the Lord.

Theme Conversation

Prayer of Confession (Unison):

Help us to be brave, O God. In the face of injustice, in the face of inequity, in the face of oppression and cruelty, help us to be brave. Often in our lives, we allow ourselves to be intimidated by the loud and the large, letting fear guide our actions and decisions. Forgive us those times where we have seen something happening, known it was wrong, and done nothing. Forgive us those times where we have participated in the wrong-doing, knowing there was another way. Forgive us. Embrace us. Bring us to wholeness in you. We offer this prayer in the name of the one who embraced the world: Jesus Christ. AMEN

Assurance of God's Love & A New Creed (VU 918)

As far as we go, as lost as we feel, God's loving arms are forever reaching for us. We are found in God's love, and set on a new path of wholeness not just for ourselves but for the world. Know that you are forgiven. Know that you are loved. Know that you are called. As we acknowledge that forgiveness, love, and call, we boldly proclaim our faith together in A New Creed saying:

We are not alone...

Today's Scripture: Acts 6:1—7:2a, 44-60

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait at tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.' What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.' They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. They set up false witnesses who said, 'This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.' And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Then the high priest asked him, 'Are these things so?' And Stephen replied:

'Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,

'Our ancestors had the tent of testimony in the wilderness, as God directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. Our ancestors in turn

brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors. And it was there until the time of David, who found favour with God and asked that he might find a dwelling-place for the house of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?"

'You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.'

When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

This is the Word of our God.

Praise be to you, O Creator.

Anthem Easter Hallelujah - Leonard Cohen/Kelly Mooney

Message Words of Power

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn: We have this Ministry VU 510

**We have this ministry
and we are not discouraged;
it is by God's own power
that we may live and serve.**

**Openly we share God's word,
speaking truth as we believe,
praying that the shadowed world
may healing light receive.**

We have this ministry, O God, receive our living.

**O Christ, the tree of life,
our end and our beginning,
we grow to fullest flower
when rooted in your love.
Brothers, sisters, clergy, lay,
called to service by your grace,
different cultures, different gifts,
the young and old a place.
We have this ministry, O God, receive our giving.**

**The yoke of Christ is ours,
the whole world is our parish;
we daily take the cross,
the burden and the joy.
Bearing hurts of those we serve,
wounded, bruised and bowed with pain,
Holy Spirit, bread and wine,
we die and rise again.
We have this ministry, O God, receive our loving.**

How Can I Give?

HOW CAN I GIVE TO MY CHURCH WHEN THE CHURCH IS CLOSED?

1/ If you have internet banking, you can E-transfer funds to QUC by sending the funds to QUC@nb.aibn.com. Do not forget to send a separate email with the answer to your security question.

2/ go to www.CanadaHelps.org and search for Quispamsis united Church. You can give to the church by using your credit card. The address says Gondola Point, do not worry, that is us.

3/ you can sign up for a pre-authorized remittance (PAR) donation which comes out of your bank account or credit card once a month. You can cancel this at any time. Contact Brion Crossman at 849-6003 for details.

4/ mail or deliver your giving's to our treasurer, Brion Crossman, 22 Country Crescent, Quispamsis, E2E 1T2

Offertory Dedication Hymn: Grateful

MV 182

**Grateful for the life you give us
thankful for your holy son
joyful in your spirit flowing
over all O God of love
grateful for the bread of heaven
thankful for your holy word
joyful in your mercy flowing
we will praise you.**

Prayer of Dedication (Unison):

In our striving to live faithfully and follow you, O God, we bring before you the offerings of our very lives, the fruit of our labour, and the gifts of the Spirit born in each of us. Take us and what we give, whatever form that takes, and bless all of it. Use us and our gifts for the building up of your kingdom in this place, and for the spreading of your Word throughout this community and beyond. All that we offer is in the strong name of Christ who showed us the way. AMEN

Prayers for Ourselves and Others & Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Go to the World VU 420 (1, 3, & 4)

- 1 Go to the world! Go into all the earth.
Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,
baptising as the sign of our rebirth.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

- 3 Go to the world! Go struggle, bless and pray;
the nights of tears give way to joyous day.
As servant Church, you follow Christ's own way.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

- 4 Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
for I am with you 'til the age shall end,
when all the hosts of glory cry 'Amen!'
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

SENDING FORTH

Commissioning (Responsive):

When Christ was among us, he showed us how to walk.

May we go from this place walking in his way to those places where our gifts are needed.

In Christ's followers, we see glimpses of how to love.

May we go from this place eager to support one another on the way.

In the Word that we hear, we are called to serve.

May we go from this place to be the hands and feet of Christ, to feed, clothe, welcome, and embrace God's Children.

Benediction

Go now with the love of God in your hearts, the Peace of Christ in your hand, and the power of the Holy Spirit at your backs to share the good news you've heard this day. AMEN

Choral Closing: Go Now In Peace VU 964

Go now in peace, go now in peace.

**May the love of God surround you
everywhere, everywhere you may go.**

Postlude Darwall's 148th - arr. Adam Mason