

Quispamsis United Church

Lent: Chasing the Light

February 26th, 2022 - First Sunday of Lent

Liturgical Colour: Purple

Presider: Rev. Richard Bowley

Director of Music: Stephen Alexander

Reader: Stephen Alexander

Centering Passage: *Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit, there is no deceit.*
-Psalm 32:1-2

GATHERING TOGETHER

Lighting of the Christ Candle: The light of Christ reveals who we are, but also the truth of the world around us. May this revealing light show us those things that we have been blind to - whether through intention or ignorance - and guide us to wholeness as a people, and as creation.

Opening Music: A Lenten Meditation - Craig A. Penfield

Welcome & Lighting of Affirm Candle

Acknowledgement of Territories

Celebrations & Announcements

Introit: Lord Prepare Me MV 18 (X2)
Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living,
Sanctuary for you.

Greeting

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 enter this season of Lent, knowing a journey into the soul is ahead;

Prepare us, O God, to face whatever adversity may come.

We enter this week, uncertain of the distractions that might arrive;

Help us, O God, to keep our minds on You.

We enter this day, hoping to set our hearts on Christ;

Keep us, O God, to the way of faith.

We enter this time of worship, dependent upon our God;

Show us, O God, Your way, Your truth, and Your life.

Prayer of the Day

God of Grace, Forgiveness, and Mercy, we come to you in search of all three. In you we find the mercy we need so that we do not continue to punish ourselves. In you we find the forgiveness for what we have done or left undone. In you we find the grace for a second chance to change our lives, to change the world. Enter into this time of worship so that we might find you and find a way forward in the light. Hear us as we offer this and all our prayers in the strong name of your son and our saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Hymn:

There's a Wideness to God's Mercy

VU 271

**There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice
which is more than liberty.**

**There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven;
there is no place where earth's failings
have such gracious judgement given.**

**There is plentiful redemption
in the blood that Christ has shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the Head.**

**Troubled souls, why will you scatter
like a crowd of frightened sheep?
Foolish hearts, why will you wander
from a love so true and deep?**

**For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.**

LISTENING FOR TRUTH

Chasing the Light Liturgy (Responsive):

As people born of the divine spark (...) that no darkness can overcome.

The journey through Lent is a path through light and darkness.

Today we stand at the beginning, bathed in light with the way open before us.

We begin this journey with forgiveness to guide us.

Forgiveness: the reason for Christ's mission, the reason God broke into this world.

God's forgiveness is eternal, but far too often we hold forgiveness for ransom.

(put out candle)

For those times where we have failed to forgive,

for those times where we have held a grudge,

for relationships broken,

for opportunities for wholeness lost,

for the ways that we diminish the light of creation

because we are too afraid, too selfish, too angry, we pray O God. Guide us by your light,

even when all light seems to go out.

(silent reflection)

Time for All Ages

Sung Prayer of Illumination:

Open our Hearts

MV 21 (X2)

Open our hearts, open our minds.

Open our lives to you, O loving God.

Reading: Matthew 18:15-35

'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

'For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So, the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise be to you, O Christ.

Message The Limits of Forgiveness

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn:

Forgive Our Sins

VU 364

**'Forgive our sins as we forgive,'
you taught us, Lord, to pray,
but you alone can grant us grace
to live the words we say.**

**How can your pardon reach and bless
the unforgiving heart,
that broods on wrongs and will not let
old bitterness depart?**

**In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew:
what trivial debts are owed to us,
how great our debt to you!**

**Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls,
and bid resentment cease;
then, bound to all in bonds of love,
our lives will spread your peace.**

Moment for Community: Finance Committee

How Can I Give?

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

4/ 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.

5/ if you come for in-person worship, there is a plate as you enter the church where you can place your offering.

6/ As we consider the greater work of the United Church consider giving to Mission and Service Fund through your regular offering or at <https://united-church.ca>

Offertory Dedication Hymn:

We give you but your own
**We give you but your own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is yours alone,
we give it gratefully.**

VU 542

Prayer of Dedication (Unison):

We come to you this day, O God, offering all that we are. We bring to you our gifts of time, talent, and treasure, but we also offer up to you our sin, anger, and brokenness. Heal us with your grace, and bless us with your love so that we, with the gifts that we bring, may be a part of the building of your kingdom of peace and love. This we pray in the name of Christ our companion and our guide. AMEN

Prayers of the People & Sung Lord's Prayer

(VU 959)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, you will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil,
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.**

Hymn:

**Christ is Made the Sure Foundation
Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord, and precious,
binding all the church in one;
holy Zion's help for ever,
and its confidence alone.**

VU 325

**To this temple where we call you,
come, O Lord of Hosts, today;
with your faithful loving-kindness
hear your servants as they pray,
and your fullest benediction
shed within its walls always.**

**Here bestow on all your servants
what they ask of you to gain;
what they gain from you for ever
with the blessed to retain,
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.**

**Laud and honour to the Father,
laud and honour to the Son,
laud and honour to the Spirit,
ever three and ever one,
one in mighty, and one in glory,
while unending ages run.**

SENDING FORTH

Commissioning (Responsive):

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, let us go into our lives and into the world seeking to offer the grace and mercy that we have received to those who we meet.

Like Jesus we will carry love, healing and hope into our world by breaking chains of guilt and shame through forgiveness.

In doing this we clear the path so that

Christ's light shines through us, God's love is reflected in all we do, and we take our place as agents of God's healing and redeeming power.

Benediction

Go from here to walk the Lenten road knowing the Grace of Christ attends you, the love of God surrounds you and the Holy Spirit will guide and empower you today and always.

Choral Closing:

Lead O, O Cloud of Presence

VU 421 (vs 3)

**Lead on O God of freedom, and guide us on our way,
and help us trust the promise through struggle and delay.
We pray our sons and daughters may journey to that land
where justice dwells with mercy, and love is law's demand.**

Closing Music

Postlude in D Major - Johann Kindermann