

Quispamsis United Church

Lent: Chasing the Light

March 19th, 2023 - Fourth Sunday of Lent

Liturgical Colour: Purple

Presider: Rev. Richard Bowley

Director of Music: Stephen Alexander

Reader: Cindy Millican

Centering Passage: *O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.*

-Psalm 43:3-4

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, as creation.

Opening Music Lord, Hear Us Pray - Steven Scott

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):

God has called us to this place

Each one of us is unique, with differing gifts and talents.

Yet each talent represented here is valuable in God's realm.

We come seeking help to find ways in which to use our talents for healing and hope.

Let us start by praising the Lord who has called us here.

Let us open our hearts and spirits to God's word for us.

Prayer of the Day

Blessed Lord, we come into this place with praise and thanksgiving for the many blessings that you have poured out on us, but we also come seeking guidance. To each of us you give your gifts of grace and love, and beyond those you have given us each the ability to share those gifts with the world in our own way. Inspire those of us gifted with a voice to raise it in praise of you. Empower those gifted with strength to support others. Encourage those gifted with courage to bring hope to places of fear. Guide us this day, we pray O God, that all our gifts might be used for the building up of your kingdom. This we ask in the strong name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN

Hymn:

O God, Our Help In Ages Past
**O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:**

VU 806

**under the shadow of thy throne
thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone,
and our defence is sure**

**Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received its frame,
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.**

**A thousand ages, in thy sight,
are like an evening gone,
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.**

**Time like an ever-rolling stream
soon bears us all away;
we fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.**

**O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guide while troubles last,
and our eternal home.**

LISTENING FOR TRUTH

Chasing the Light Liturgy (Responsive):

As people born of the divine spark, (...) the divine spark that cannot go out, that no darkness can overcome.

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

Today we continue our journey, but the light is not as strong as it once was.

What light there is reminds us that as big as the dark can feel, a spark can scatter so many shadows.

So it is with hope in the face of despair.

Through Christ, hope springs eternal, but we often don't allow ourselves to see what might yet be.

(put out candle)

For those times when we have let despair overtake us,

for those times where we have let fear be our guide,

for the tomorrows we cannot see because we do not believe they could be,

for the assurances that we cast aside when Christ stands before us calling us on,

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 25:1-13

'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise replied, "No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves." And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you." Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise be to you, O Christ.

Gift of Music Love Is All Our Joy - Malcolm Archer (Senior Choir)

Message An Unexpected Journey

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn:

Arise, Your Light is Come
Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God,
Which shines on you today.

VU 79

Arise, your light is come!
Fling wide the prison door;
Proclaim the captives' liberty,
Good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light is come!
All you in sorrow born,
Bind up the broken-hearted ones
And comfort those who mourn.

**Arise, your light is come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing;
God's power will make us strong.**

Moment for Community: Pastoral Care 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):

Your abundance in our lives is evident, O God. Your Grace, Your Love, and the many everyday blessings that we are afforded come as clear as the dawn and surround us like the air we breathe. In this time, we give back part of those gifts certain and faithful in the knowledge that you will continue to be with us, to guide us. Bless what we have given here today, what we have given electronically, and the many ways in which our hands and feet do your work

through the week. All this we ask in the strong name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.
AMEN

Prayers of the People & Sung Lord's Prayer

VU 959

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your 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:

**O Jesus I have Promised
O Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end;
remain for ever near me,
my Saviour and my friend:
I shall not fear the journey
if you are by my side,
not wander from the pathway
if you will be my guide.**

VU 120

**O let me feel you near me:
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, then draw nearer
and shield my soul from sin.**

**O let me hear you speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
now speak, and make me listen,
O guardian of my soul.**

O Jesus, you have promised
to all who follow you,
that where you are in glory
your servant shall be too.
And, Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end:
O give me grace to follow,
my Saviour and my friend.

SENDING FORTH

Commissioning (Responsive):

God sends us from this place

To share the gifts we have been given,

To be a part of the building of the kingdom

To share the Good News of healing and hope found in service to God.

Let us go from this place, praising God and inviting others to join in,

opening hearts by sharing God's word with all.

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

Chorale Postlude - Roger C. Wilson