

Quispamsis United Church

Lent: Ashes & Promises

March 6th, 2022 - First Sunday of Lent

Liturgical Colour: Purple

Presider: Rev. Richard Bowley

Musician: Stephen Alexander

Reader: Karen Young

Centering Passage: *These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.*

Psalm 104:27-30

GATHERING TOGETHER

Welcome

Acknowledgement of Territories

Celebrations & Announcements

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light this candle to show us the way on a journey just begun. It is a journey to discover who we are, who Christ was and is, and what our relationship is together. May this light lead us through dark valleys as well as green pastures.

Opening Music

Meditation on "How Great Thou Art " - Albert Zabel

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):

The journey of Lent has started

Some of us like this reflective journey, some of us don't

We know where we are going to Jerusalem, the cross and ultimately the empty tomb

But there are many steps to get there; we need some stops along the way

We come into this holy space to rest and gather strength for the journey

We come to looking for quiet and comfort, we come for wisdom and healing, we come to be with God

Come now for it is time to worship. Come now and offer your praise.

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, you guide us on our journey of faith, calling us out of our dark places and offering us the grace of new life. You are constantly creating and recreating as you breathe your spirit upon us and the world, surprising us with the possibilities you open before us. Call us out of our complacency and routines, set us free from our self-imposed bonds, and fill us with your spirit of life, compassion, and peace, this we pray. Amen.

Hymn: Throughout these Lenten days VU 108 (vs 1, 4, & 6)

**1 Throughout these Lenten days and nights
we turn to walk the inward way,
where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,
we live in hope till Easter day.**

**4 And though the road is hard and steep,
the Spirit ever calls us on
through Calvary's dying, dark and deep,
until we see the coming dawn.**

**6 Rejoice, O sons and daughters! Sing
and shout hosannas! Raise the strain!
For Christ, whose death Good Friday brings,
on Easter day will live again!**

LISTENING FOR TRUTH

Theme Conversation A Love So Strong!

Ash Liturgy (Responsive):

Throughout this season of Lent, we are all being asked to carry the ashes of last year's Palm Sunday branches. When we waved those branches, we were declaring our faith, our trust, and our dedication to Christ.

These ashes are a symbol of promises: promises made, promises kept, and promises broken. Let us come before Christ honestly and humbly.

We raised our palm branches in celebration of you,

**and on those same leaves have written our sin and brokenness, despite your having
broken into our lives to show us a new way.**

We carry the ashes of those palm branches as a reminder.

These ashes remind us of our doubt in the face of your Holy Presence. You touch our lives, changing us completely and then we forget how you have shaped us. You embrace us through the dark, and when the light comes we wonder if you were there.

We carry these ashes as a reminder of our doubt.

Speak to us again, for we long to believe.

For a moment, let us focus on these ashes, lifting our prayers for guidance and promises to follow to Christ.

(moment for reflective silence)

Sung Prayer of Illumination:

Tree of Life

VU 121 (vs 4) QUC Recording

**Gentle Jesus, mighty Spirit,
come inflame our hearts anew,
we may all your joy inherit
if we bear the cross for you,
if we bear the cross for you.**

Reading:

John 11:1-44

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So, the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she

went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So, they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise be to you, O Christ.

Message

If Only...

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn:

Let My Spirit Always Sing

MV 83 (vs 1, 2, & 4)

**Let my spirit always sing, though my heart be wintering,
Though the season of despair give no sign that you are there,
God to whom my days belong, let there always be a song.**

**Though my body be confined, let your word engage my mind,
Let the inner eye discern how much more there is to learn,
See the world becoming whole through the window of the soul.**

**Let my spirit always sing, to your Spirit answering,
Through the silence, through the pain, know my hope is not in vain,
Like a feather on your breath trust your love, through life and death.**

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

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

Offertory Dedication Hymn: For All Your Goodness VU 549

**For all your goodness God, we give you thanks,
Thanks for the food we eat and for the friends we meet,
And each new day we greet, we give you thanks.**

Prayer of Dedication (Unison):

On a journey just begun, you call us to leave behind our burdens and follow you into new life. Receive all that we are, all that we might be, all that we hope to be by your grace. Bless all that we give. Bless all that we are. Support us and encourage us on our Lenten journey as we strive to build the kingdom in our hearts and in our world. We ask this and all things in the strong name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN

Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

Hymn: We Shall Go Out With Hope VU 586 QUC Recording

**We shall go out with hope of resurrection;
we shall go out, from strength to strength go on;
we shall go out and tell our stories boldly;
tales of a love that will not let us go.
We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted;
we'll dream our dream of hurts that can be healed;
we'll weave a cloth of all the world united
within the vision of new life who sets us free.**

**We'll give a voice to those who have not spoken;
we'll find the words for those whose lips are sealed;
we'll make the tunes for those who sing no longer,
expressive love alive in every heart.
We'll share our joy with those who are still weeping,
raise hymns of strength for hearts that break in grief,
we'll leap and dance the resurrection story
including all in circles of our love.**

SENDING FORTH

Commissioning (Responsive):

Come out! Jesus commands,

He calls us from the tombs of our existence into the brightness of a new day.

Come out! Jesus cries,

And He unbinds us from the chains of our past.

Come out! Jesus calls,

And He entices us into a world filled with grace and possibility.

So: Go out! into a world that needs the Spirit of God.

We go into the world to live as God's resurrected people!

Benediction

Continue this journey - this path to the cross - inspired by God, encouraged by Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Choral Closing:

Tree of Life

VU 121 (vs 5)

**Christ, you lead and we shall follow,
stumbling though our steps may be,
one with you in joy and sorrow,
we the river, you the sea,
we the river, you the sea.**

Closing Music

March in D (Rinaldo) - G.F. Handel