



Merging Waters United Church

Sunday Morning Worship

“Through the Night” - March 5, 2023 - Lent 2

WELCOME / BIENVENUE

People of all ages, identities, and walks of life are welcome.

Wherever you are, whoever you are, we welcome you in love and community to worship.

Wherever we are, we're close in one another's hearts.

Toutes et tous sont bienvenus, peu importe l'âge, l'identité ou les conditions de vie.

Peu importe où que vous soyez, qui que vous soyez, nous vous accueillons dans l'amour et la communauté pour louer Dieu ensemble.

Notre amour n'est jamais limité par la distance.

Please join in the responses in **bold text**.

Keep our worship scent-free! To help fellow worshippers with chemical sensitivities, please do not wear perfume or scented products (lotion, hair spray) if attending in person.

To protect personal privacy, please do not take photos or videos without authorization.

LIFE AND WORK OF THE PEOPLE

ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

We acknowledge that the lands our churches and many of our homes sit on have been stewarded by the first peoples of Turtle Island, among them the Kanien'kehá:ka, “Mohawk” peoples, as well as nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the neighbouring Huron-Wendat, Anishinaabeg, and Abenaki peoples. We commit ourselves as a faith community to the multi-generational work of reconciliation, the pursuit of true justice and flourishing well-being for all peoples who now call Canada home.

MUSICAL CENTERING:

Vesper Hymn by Ludwig von Beethoven

MEDITATION

Bryson Davis

CANDLE LIGHTING

Light a candle at home if you wish!

SPIRITUAL FOCUS

Come into the wilderness.

Step into the unknown possibility that is here in this place with all of our questions.

The sun might be shining but it still feels bleak.

We step into the wilderness because we have questions, and it is here that it feels safe to ask what we long to know.

We come together to find deeper understanding of God's love.

OPENING PRAYER

God of night and of day, we dare to venture out into the unknown – to the edge of the wilderness where you will guide us.

We come to be led and encouraged.

We come to find answers to questions we didn't even know we had.

We come to find you, steadfast and true.

Amen.

HYMN VOICES UNITED # 626

I Heard the Voice of Jesus

LITANY Lent II (*from PWS&D Litanies for Lent 2023, by Ian Fraser and Jim Goring*)

Just as the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness,

the Spirit sends us into places of uncertainty.

There we confront our weakness and insecurities.

Even when our situation changes, we cling to the tried and the true.

We insist that what worked in the past

will continue to work in the future.

Yet, Jesus calls us to die to our old ways so that the new will emerge.

He said that we need to be born again

to see God's new realm.

Embracing it will mean accepting different values that no longer feed our egos.

It will mean putting the needs of others

before our own.

We know the depth of God's love, revealed to us in Jesus, God's Son.

When we are reborn by God's Spirit,

we will go where the Spirit blows us

and love as God loves us.

YOUNG AT HEART

A Nighttime Visit

A story based on John 3:1–17

HYMN VOICES UNITED # 639

One More Step Along the Road

SCRIPTURE

John 3:1–17 Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

Jesus answered and said to him, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

Nicodemus said to Him, **“How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”**

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, we speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

EXPLORING THE WILDERNESS OF QUESTIONS AT NIGHT

APPLICATION FOR TODAY

“Through the Night”

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Look to the wildness of the hills! From where does our help come?

**Our help comes from God,
who made heaven and Earth;**

**who sustains the universe, keeping the sun in place and the moon on track;
who provides sunshine and shade to nurture and protect life, day and night.**

Look to the skies! From where does our help come?

Our help comes from God,

**who showed such immense love for us in the person of Jesus Christ;
who came not to judge or condemn anyone but to give eternal life.**

Look around! From where does our help come?

Our help comes from God,
whose Spirit is always at our side;
whose presence is like the wind,
powerful, unpredictable, yet personal,
stirring us into new possibilities and bringing about new birth.

OFFERING

OFFERATORY HYMN More Voices #187 We Give Our Thanks/Reamo Leboga

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We bring you gifts, O God, with all our questions. We know that you will work wonders with all we offer to renew the bleakness with new wonders. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY / PRAYERS OF JOY AND CONCERN

We come to you, O God, in the bleakness of our doubt,
when questions arise,
and we are sure where to find our strength.

We pray for your blessing in our boldness to dare to give voice to so many questions.
We want to know so much,
and it is hard to challenge the voices that deride, put down, and condemn our wondering.
We listen for the wind to blow,
to hear its sound howling through our souls with understanding and grace.
O God, we are newborns in our hope and confusion.

Hear the deep yearnings of our heart, O God!
Open in us the ways of genuine compassion.
We live in a world of stark and confusing contrasts:
beauty and ugliness, generosity and impoverishment,
hope and despair, honesty and deception.

We turn to you, seeking in the stillness – the refuge and gift of silence –
your presence, calm, beckoning voice and renewing perspective.

Guide us in our prayer, strengthen us in our action for this our community, nation and world
In the faith, hope, and love of Christ, we pray, Amen.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS / THE LORD'S PRAYER VOICES UNITED # 960 **SUNG**

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. Amen

MUSICAL OFFERING:

Just a Closer Walk with Thee
traditional Gospel, arranged by Michael Woytiuk


COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

The wildness of night can feel endless and so lonely,
but the wind blows, and the Spirit moves again.

Know that the sun will not hurt you by day, nor the moon by night,
for God will protect you and watch over you, this day and always.

MUSICAL SENDING:

The Storm is Passing Over
Charles Tindley arranged by Barbara Baker

Thank you for joining in worship today 

MERGING WATERS UNITED CHURCH

A community of caring within the United Church of Canada

Union building @ 24 Maple, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue

Beaurepaire building @ 25 Fieldfare, Beaconsfield

Lisa Byer-de Wever, Pastor

Michael Woytiuk, Ministry of Music

Jo-Anne Windover, Office Administrator

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UPCOMING SERVICES at 10:30 a.m.

12-Mar-23	Lent 3 Merging Waters annual meeting Bring your lunch!	Fieldfare
19-Mar-23	Lent 4 Celebration of covenant between Lisa Byer-de Wever and Merging Waters United Church 2 pm with reception to follow Note: No morning service	Maple
26-Mar-23	Lent 5	Fieldfare
2-Apr-23	Palm/Passion Sunday	Maple
6-Apr-23	Maundy Thursday	TBD
7-Apr-23	Good Friday	TBD
9-Apr-23	Easter Sunday	Fieldfare