

Merging Waters United Church



EMBOLDENED TO PROCLAIM, EASTER 5

May 7, 2023

WELCOME / BIENVENUE

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

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.

LIFE AND WORK OF THE PEOPLE

ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

MUSICAL CENTERING VOICES UNITED #383

Come O Holy Spirit Come

THE LIGHT AT OUR CORE

Light a candle at home if you wish!

SPIRITUAL FOCUS

Like the multi-hued pebbles gathered onto a beach,

we come from many places.

Like river stones, smooth from life's surges or chipped in the world's torrents,

so we come worn and wounded.

Like precious stones, chosen, crafted and valued,

so we come, cared about and loved by God.

Like the stones of a building,

so God brings us together.

Come, as living stones, into God's presence!

We come to worship God.

OPENING PRAYER

Creator, you have shaped a place for us made of love and held in grace.

It is filled with the whispers of the ancients who followed you and sculpted our faith.

Breathe into this place again,
that we may know your way,
your truth, and your life. Amen.

HYMN: VOICES UNITED # 266

Amazing Grace

SCRIPTURE

Acts 7: 55 - 60

Brave Witness - Based on Acts 7:55–60

The church started with a few people, Jesus' followers, spreading the good news.

Then more people heard about Jesus and became followers, too.

In just a short time, many more people wanted to find out about Jesus and live the way he taught. They all came together and were one group, one body.

The leaders soon realized that they needed more people to help tell the story, to say the prayers, and to care for all the people in the group who needed help. The disciples decided that a particular group of leaders called deacons was required to care for the people. They chose people who were full of faith and the Holy Spirit. One of them was Stephen.

The new deacon, Stephen, cared for and served the people well. He made sure every person got enough food. Stephen did his work because he loved God, and he believed that God sent Jesus. However, this strong belief got Stephen into trouble.

Stephen did more than good works. He told others about Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, the one sent by God. The religious leaders argued with Stephen about this and would not listen. They did not believe what Stephen believed about Jesus, and they wanted to stop Stephen from talking about Jesus. Some of them plotted against Stephen. **Soon Stephen was arrested and taken before the religious judges.**

These leaders and judges were angry! **People told lies about Stephen.** When he said they were wrong, the leaders and judges got even angrier. **But Stephen didn't stop speaking.** "You are against God's Holy Spirit," he shouted. Now the religious leaders would take no more. **They dragged Stephen away.**

They took Stephen outside the city. **Even though the crowd began to throw stones at Stephen, Stephen was filled with God's love.**

When Stephen fell to the ground, he yelled, "God, do not hold this against them." Then Stephen, the faithful deacon and follower of Jesus Christ, died.

APPLICATION FOR TODAY

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING VOICES UNITED #652

Be Still My Soul

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

You are listening, with God, to the hurts and pains of this world.

You are paying attention to where love is needed.

Take these stones to remember that you are alive in God's love and called to offer mercy and grace.

God sends you out to proclaim mighty acts with awe inspiring light.

HYMN MORE VOICES # 97

Listen God is Calling

PRAYERS OF JOY AND CONCERN

God, we come before you in a spirit of prayer,

knowing that our world is hurting.

We know you have great compassion for all your people,
and that we are dear to you.

We know you have created a safe place, a refuge,
for those who need it.

Guide them to it, we pray.

There is a place for those who mourn and for those who hurt,
a place of comfort and a place of healing:

for those we have lost to illness,
and those we have never known.

In silence, we pray... **Hear us.**

There is a place for those who hunger and thirst,
a place of banquets and grace:

for farmers trapped in unfair trade,
families dispossessed.

In silence, we pray... **Hear us.**

There is a place for those imprisoned for belief and justice,
a place of freedom and full lives:
for mothers of the disappeared,
fathers exiled.

In silence, we pray... **Hear us.**

There is a place for those oppressed and downtrodden,
a place of liberation and justice:
for children of sectarianism,
families divided.

In silence, we pray... **Hear us.**

Hear all our prayers, loving God,
and answer according to your will and purpose.

We pray in Christ's name. **Amen**

THE PRAYER OF JESUS/THE LORD'S PRAYER, Sung

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
forever and ever.

HYMN: MORE VOICES #196

We Will Take What You Offer


COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

Go, as Easter people, living stones, called and chosen,

forgiven and formed into a new community, working together to show God's mercy and truth.

We go to live in God's way in the name of Christ and the power of the Spirit. Amen.

MUSICAL SENDING Feeling Lighter Moving On – Music and Lyrics by Michael Woytiuk

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.

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UPCOMING SERVICES at 10:30 a.m.

14-May-23	Easter 6 To See Is to Love	Maple Acts 17:22–31, Psalm 66:8–201, Peter 3:13–22, John 14:15–21
21-May-23	Easter 7 Sensory Glory	Fieldfare Acts 1:6–14, Psalm 68:1–10, 32–351, Peter 4:12–14, 5:6–11, John 17:1–11

Please consult the website for online worship links:

www.mergingwaters.ca/Worship-online

Download the Zoom App at <https://zoom.us/download>