

Home Worship Service January 17, 2021



Ice on the St. Croix River

Welcoming the Light

As a candle is lit, say:

Gather us in to the light of Epiphany –
a light that plays and flickers,
a flame that is warm and inviting.

Gather us in to the light of God –
a light that has burned for eternity,
the flame of the universe.

Gather us in to the light of Jesus –
a light born in a manger,
the flame of the poor and humble.

Gather us in . . .

Song for Centring

VU 55

In the Bleak Midwinter

https://youtu.be/r_dO91hQhkU

by Susan Boyle

Gathering Words

On this winter morning,
we gather here.
We have found our way from comfortable beds,
from morning chores,
from cups of coffee,
and from weekend plans
to this place.

We have found our way to a space
that only exists
because we have created it
with our presence.

And we come to melt into a moment.
We come to be intentional in our thoughts and actions.
We come to worship.
We come to take our place in community.

May we find the sacred in the screens of our devices,
the holy in the faces of one another,
and wisdom in both the words and the pauses.

Readings from Our Tradition

Read by Gary

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (NRSV) “Samuel’s Calling”

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, “Samuel! Samuel!”[a] and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

Psalm 147:12-20 (NRSV) “Praising the God of Winter”

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

For he strengthens the bars of your gates;

he blesses your children within you.

He grants peace within your borders;

he fills you with the finest of wheat.

He sends out his command to the earth;

his word runs swiftly.

He gives snow like wool;

he scatters frost like ashes.

He hurls down hail like crumbs—

who can stand before his cold?

He sends out his word, and melts them;

he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.

He declares his word to Jacob,

his statutes and ordinances to Israel.

He has not dealt thus with any other nation;

they do not know his ordinances.

Praise the Lord!

Reading from Our World “Song for a Winter’s Night” by Gordon Lightfoot
(Black American poet and activist, 1902-1967) read by Ali

The lamp is burnin' low upon my table top
The snow is softly falling
The air is still in the silence of my room
I hear your voice softly calling

If I could only have you near
To breathe a sigh or two
I would be happy just to hold the hands I love
On this winter night with you

The smoke is rising in the shadows overhead
My glass is almost empty
I read again between the lines upon the page
The words of love you sent me

If I could know within my heart
That you were lonely too
I would be happy just to hold the hands I love
On this winter night with you

The fire is dying now, my lamp is growing dim
The shades of night are lifting
The morning light steals across my window pane
Where webs of snow are drifting

If I could only have you near
To breathe a sigh or two
I would be happy just to hold the hands I love
And to be once again with with you
To be once again with you

Song for Preparing VU 530 All Beautiful the March of Days
<https://youtu.be/sPUmDTNpGPc>
by Kim Paterson

Reflection by Ali

Snowflakes that Stay

Introduction

As I look around and see the snow-covered trees,
and ice on the river,
I realize that the last time I was with you,
it was November the 8th
and we were talking about peace together.

I sent you off from that gathering by saying:

*May justice roll down like autumn leaves
and love be as abundant as the harvest.
Go in peace.
Go to be peace.
Peace surround you.
Peace attend you.
Peace be yours forever.*

The autumn leaves have now been put to bed,
and we face the undeniable cold of midwinter.

Back in November,
I had hoped that when we met again,
things would feel a bit calmer, a bit more stable.

However, since then,
Christmas has come and gone,
and 2020, a year that will go down in history,
has also ended.

And here we are.
Things have gotten colder,
both in terms of weather and world events.
And the great pandemic lingers on.

I will admit to you that I have been experiencing
a great fatigue with it all –
and you know what “it all” entails.
I find myself digging deep these days to stay grounded
and to get through the days.

I have been turning to walks in the fresh air,
cups of hot tea, and old familiar classic movies.
That’s where / am right now.

The Sound of Music

The other day, I watched *The Sound of Music*.
I am perhaps a little late in my viewing
as many consider it to be a Christmas movie
but it is enjoyable in January too.

The scene that I related to this time around
was when Maria –
the nanny or governess famously played by Julie Andrews –
is starting to get to know the seven Von Trapp children
she takes care of.

A storm is raging outside.
As lightning flashes and thunder shakes the room,
Maria tenderly gathers all the children onto a big brass bed,
much like a mother hen gathering chicks under her wing.

She tells them that when she is afraid,
she thinks about all of her favourite things
and that helps to bring her comfort:

*Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes
Snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes
Silver white winters that melt into spring
These are a few of my favourite things*

This is a lesson much needed by these children,
who find themselves in tumultuous times.
Their mother has died,
their father is too distant and strict,
and a war is about to break out,
worse than any lightening storm they can imagine.
We might say it felt like they were frozen in the dead of winter.
And Maria’s love brought forth a melting like spring.

Yes, bringing these simple things to mind –
our favourite things -
surely can offer a moment's relief.
But what I was more struck by
was a tenderness shown
by a nurturing and caring soul
in a chaotic time
to those who needed it most.

When Maria gathers those children in,
calls them by their names,
and makes them feel safe,
I felt everything I needed to feel for just a moment.

Samuel

Our scriptures are filled with stories
of people being called by name.

We think of Jesus,
making his way along the sea coast,
calling out the names of fishermen and tax collectors,
and gathering them into his mighty band of disciples.

And much before Jesus,
Moses was called by God in quite a spectacular way,
as he hears his own name coming out of a burning bush.
In that moment,
he is gathered in to the presence of God.

And after Jesus,
Paul called out the names of many
by writing to their communities
and acknowledging them individually.
“Dear Corinth,” he says.
“Blessings to you, Ephesus”
“Hello, Rome!”

Our holy storytellers return time and again
to that theme of a voice calling out.

This morning,
the lectionary brings us to the story of young Samuel,
who is not unlike one of the Von Trapp kids
and I might argue, not unlike us at this moment in history.

Samuel lives at the temple.
He is the helper of Eli, the high priest.
Challenges surround him.

He is without his mother,
as he has been given up as a kind of offering to God.

The person he is closest too – Eli –
is old and feeble
and needs a lot of assistance.

Israel too is feeble and falling apart.
Because of government mismanagement,
it is badly decaying on every side.

And in the face of this,
the temple is being pretty inactive.
Much like the eyes of old Eli,
which are growing dim,
so is the temple's light.

The story of Samuel's calling is set,
not in a raging storm,
but in the solid darkness of night.

You can picture a young boy,
laying down on the cold stone floor
of an old echoey building,
trying to get some sleep.
All alone he faces the bewitching hour –
the dead of night.
His life is frightening,
his world is chaotic,
and here he is.

When suddenly,
breaking through the deafening silence,
comes someone gently calling out his name.
"Samuel, Samuel, come here Samuel."

That must have felt like a pair of warm mittens
on bitter-cold fingers.
Perhaps it was like a crackling fire
in the hearth.
Like glimpsing a snowman,
eagerly built by small hands.

Samuel thinks the voice is coming from Eli.
Perhaps the old man needs something.
Later, of course, he realizes that it is God
who has called for him.
God is calling him to become a prophet.

But regardless if that voice came from Eli or God or some other source,
it signified a moment of connection for Samuel.
It meant that someone had seen him,
someone noticed him,
and that he was not alone in,
what might be described as,
a winter moment of his life.

Our Winter

That's where I am right now.
Maybe that's where we all are –
frozen in the hardest season,
waiting for the world to melt,
waiting for someone to call out our name
and let us know that it's going to be alright.

In those moments,
it's not always terribly easy to
focus on the beauty that also exists in this season of winter -
the sleigh bells jingling over the hills of snow,
skaters gliding on ice,
or the snowflakes that stay on our nose and eyelashes.

It is a challenge to be sure.
But even now, beauty abounds.
And we turn our thoughts of our favourite things to get us through.
We turn to the voice that calls out
both in wilderness and in snow-covered fields,
both in ancient times and in our own day.

And we know that it is there –
buried perhaps beneath 3 feet of snow –
but it is there.

Right now, there might not be too much we can do.
Pandemics and slippery weather and violent riots
and all kinds of other factors
keep us at home.

But we *can* keep listening.

And through it all,
we know that we are rooted in something greater –
something more powerful than all that currently surrounds us.
And it is to that great mystery that we belong.

Song of Reflection

Children's Winter

<https://youtu.be/TTdyyRF3XNc>

by Barra MacNeils

while watching "Drone Flight Over New Brunswick Winter" <https://youtu.be/4YNmdD7XtCY>

Offertory

We acknowledge with gratitude gifts that have been or will be given for the work of the church. It is with generous hands that they have been offered and it is with grateful hearts they will be received. May the work of the church and the world be one and may it be meaningful here and beyond. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Concern

O Holy One,
first we offer thanks for the beauty that surrounds us.
When we look at a frozen pond
or icicles glistening in the sun,
it is hard to deny the goodness that the earth continually provides.

We know too that likewise we are filled with things at which to marvel.
We are thankful for our strength and resilience,
for our gentleness and grace,
for our generosity and compassion,
and for all the gifts that are ours to use.

And when we look around our communities and into the world,
we see a planet filled with love and caring.
We see power being used to create change.
We see positivity that inspires.

But in the midst of winter days, O God,
we cannot deny the challenges of dark and cold times.
We bring to mind those who struggle to find warmth in their lives.
We think of those facing challenges that seem insurmountable.
We remember those living in fear –
fear from viruses, certainly,
and fear from uncertainty caused by poverty, illness, and violence too.

In a moment of silence,
we offer our personal prayers to you . . .

And now we gather all of these thoughts together,
as we pray together in the way that Jesus taught us, saying,
Our Father . . .

Stewardship Seconds

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit; good stewardship is practising good self-care.

Minute for Mission “Building a World Where Everyone Belongs: Lynda’s Story”
<https://youtu.be/pq9vJdrUt-8>

Announcements, Joys and Concerns

Blessing

As we end our time together and leave this special space of ours,
we go ready to face another week,
knowing that, although we may be wearied by it all,
we walk not alone.

Instead, we walk in the blessing of belonging –
belonging to community and to God.

Go forth knowing that you are indeed blessed
and may you, in turn, be a blessing to the world. Amen.

Song for Going Forth

My Favourite Things
<https://youtu.be/2G6dd7ikrXs>
by Julie Andrews

Sharing the Light

As you extinguish the candle, say:

Carry a flame to kindle the darkness,
to warm the frostiness,
to keep the shadows from overtaking.
Share this light widely and gladly
and keep it safe until we meet again.

All images, prayers, and reflections by Ali Anningson unless otherwise stated.

"It's that time of year when we have the opportunity to subscribe to the Broadview Magazine. The price remains at \$25.00 for a year's subscription.

Please let me know if you are interested and if you have any questions please email me (davebarbking@gmail.com) or phone me at 466-3465. Checks are to be made payable to Wesley United Church with a Broadview notation in the memo section, and sent to 77 Williams St. St. Andrews, NB E5B 1W8

- PRAYER REQUESTS: may be given to our Prayer Circle by**
- 1. contacting Barb King davebarbking@gmail.com**
 - 2. contacting Sharon Hannan retired@xplornet.ca or phone 466-1435**
 - 3. by asking any of us from Wesley/St James community to pass on a request**

Events:

Please visit our website for the bulletins for our ZOOM services and our At Home Worship along with any other virtual or in person gatherings <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>

Friday 15th January **10 – 11 am** **Zoom Coffee Break with Jane**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Sunday, 17th January **10 am** **ZOOM Sunday Worship**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Sunday, 17th January **Home Worship**
A Home Worship service provided as an alternative to In Person Worship [provided by email](#) or please see our website for at Home Worship and other virtual gatherings <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>

Tuesday, 19th January **2:30 – 4pm** **Wild Wisdom** **ZOOM**
please contact Francie (francie.rosie@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending ZOOM <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Thursday, 21st January **7:00 – 7:30 pm** **Jane on Facebook Live**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Friday 22nd January **10 – 11 am** **Zoom Coffee Break with Jane**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Sunday, 24th January **10 am** **ZOOM Sunday Worship**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Sunday, 24th January **Home Worship**
A Home Worship service provided as an alternative to In Person Worship [provided by email](#) or please see our website for at Home Worship and other virtual gatherings <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>

Please Note:

Wesley Annual Meeting is postponed to a date TBC.

Scotch Ridge Annual Meeting is now rescheduled tentatively to January 26 depending on whether we are out of orange by then.

Sunday worship will be by Zoom and Home until February 21 [1st Sunday in Lent], assuming COVID conditions permit

Attention Committee Chairs - Annual Reports will be due January 10, 2021.
Please email them to wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com Thank you!

Please check our calendar on our website for any upcoming events or changes to events
<https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/events/>

Dedications are most welcome remembering, honouring, celebrating a special person, event or season! Please email wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com with your request. Thanks!

Photos or any other requests to go with dedications – favourite flower or season etc.....

Please send all announcements to: WesleyUnitedStAndrews@gmail.com State if you wish them to go on the Bulletin, the COOP , Facebook page, Website, or all four! (photos can be placed on all but the bulletin) Thank you!

Sent to you by
Wesley United Church, 77 William St, St Andrews NB E5B1W8 and
St James Pastoral Charge, 731 Route 745, Oak Hill, NB E5A3C7

In case of pastoral emergency, contact Rev. Jane Doull
[call 529-3474](tel:529-3474) [text 467-1494](tel:467-1494) [email jvdoull@gmail.com](mailto:jvdoull@gmail.com)

Any other matters please contact Barb Sheen, Chair of the Worship Committee on 469-4631.

Office email: WesleyUnitedStAndrews@gmail.com Website: <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca>
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