

**ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH**  
**March 5, 2023**  
**Sacrament of Communion – 2<sup>nd</sup> of Lent & Communion**  
Welcome to Worship  
Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m.  
Email [smiletoday9@proton.me](mailto:smiletoday9@proton.me) to get the Zoom link.

**Prelude**

**Opening Hymn: VU 595 *We Are Pilgrims (vs. 1, 2, 5, 6)***

1. We are pilgrims on a journey,  
fellow travellers on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.
2. Sister, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.
5. When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.
6. Brother, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

**Welcome and Announcements**

Welcome to everyone, in person and online. Together in Spirit. Today is Communion Sunday. We once again welcome Gordon Brown to lead the music, and Lorrie Leger who will share with us the hope that comes with the outreach of the Value Vault based at Sudbury Secondary School.

Those at home, if you are new here, note that our contact information is at the end of the video, and you might want to visit our Facebook page, YouTube channel, or website, or email our office manager so you can receive our weekly e-newsletter. We also have a Social Hour on Zoom, every Sunday night at 7. As always, you can get your Zoom link to join that time of connecting by sending an email to Diane. That email address is also at the end of the video and is on our main YouTube page.

**Inviting Holy Light**

As a candle burns, giving warmth and light, so may I live a warm, truthful, loving, and hopeful life.  
*[lights candle]*

**Sung Response: MV 137 *Welcome Jesus, You Are Welcome (vs. 4)***

4. Welcome, Jesus, you are welcome;  
let your loving light appear.  
In our seeing, in our being,  
Jesus, you are welcome here.

**Nurturing Safe Space**

We are all children of God, loved in our uniqueness, regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity. In this space, all are welcome. May we as a community of Faith work towards making our spaces truly safe and welcoming, as our Creator pours love extravagantly upon each of us.

## Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We are gathered today to worship on land that is the Traditional territory of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek. For thousands of years, they\* have lived on this land, honouring the Creator and living with respect for creation. We give thanks for the stewardship of the land by the First Nations and Metis peoples, and their relationship with the land and its plants and animals, and the lakes and streams with their life forms throughout the ages. We also recognize our history in the Christian churches, the colonialism that has created harm, and placed upon us the responsibility work towards healing and right relations. We accept the responsibility we have to nurture and protect this legacy.

## Call to Worship

What is it like to begin again?

**It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.**

**It is like babies learning to walk, one clumsy step at a time.**

**It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.**

**It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.**

May we find God in our seeking.

**May we learn as we go.**

May we be brave enough to begin again.

**Let us worship the God of new beginnings.**

## Opening Prayer

Along the Lenten way, may our loving God give us calm reflection.

Along the Lenten way, may our loving God give us faithful friends.

Along the Lenten way, may our loving God give us purpose and direction.

Along the Lenten way, may our loving God bring us to Jesus Christ and his cross-bound way.

Along the Lenten way, we worship you, Creator God. Amen

## Hymn: VU 639 *One More Step Along the World I Go (vs. 2)*

2. Round the corner of the world I turn, more and more about the world I learn;

all the new things that I see you'll be looking at along with me:

And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.

## Time up Front

Suzanne and I are going to have fun pretending for a moment. Imagine that *Suzanne pretends to be the mother*, I pretend to be the son, a child. We are faced with having move from a home that we love, so that mom can find a job. Imagine yourself when you have had to move, to go through change, maybe to start again.

**Mom:** Are you ready to go, honey?

**Son:** Yeah (not at all sure he wants to go), I guess so. I don't know. Look at the wall where you marked my height when I grew up. I don't want to leave that. Oh, and this reading nook. There will never be another place so comfy.

**Mom:** You never know. Maybe you will create an even better space to read where we are going!

**Son:** Oh, mom. I can't leave here. Remember grandpa and I building that treehouse out at the back. We put hours of work into that. All gone.

**Mom:** It is sad, letting go of all these things. But we have to trust that there will be new adventures, new cool things. Remember all the times at church that we are told to trust God? That sometimes people in the Bible have to leave behind things, and trust that God has something wonderful ahead of them? Well, we are kind of like all those people in the Bible.

**Son:** Mom, what about the things you like? All that painting you did, the colours in the rooms that you loved? And the fish pond in the back yard? Can you leave those behind? (Son smiles, and, Mom obviously pondering.)

**Rev. Dave to the congregation:** What, creature comforts, the things you have become attached to, what would you have trouble leaving behind if you had to move and couldn't take them with you? Anyone brave enough to share one of those things that you would have trouble parting with if you had to move tomorrow?

Offer those attachments to your Creator quietly in prayer for a moment, knowing that even as we cling to "stuff", God loves us unconditionally even as we feel that we can't quite yet, let go.

**Hymn: VU 639 *One More Step Along the World I Go (vs. 4)***

4. Give me courage when the world is rough, keep me loving though the world is tough,  
leap and sing in all I do, keep me travelling along with you:  
And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.

**Scripture Readings (Jacqueline, Alison, and James Warner-Smith)**

**Genesis 12:1-4a – NRVSUE**

*In Genesis, God commands Abram and Sarai to leave everything—their home, their family, their land—to seek the land of Canaan and begin again.*

Now the Lord said to Abram,

"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So, Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

**A Paraphrase based on John 3:1-17 (adapted)**

*Nicodemus, Nicky in our interpretation, comes to Jesus under the veil of night to ask him big faith questions. Jesus invites Nicky to begin again, to learn a new way of knowing and living out their faith.*

**Voice 1 (Narrator):** Nicky had always been a confident person: sure of God, sure of their faith, sure of themselves, and sure of the answers – after all, weren't they a great teacher? But now, Nicky was confused: unsure of God, faith, and unsure of Who is Nicky?; and they weren't even sure of the questions, let alone the answers.

It started when Nicky met Jesus, a young man from Nazareth. Jesus had caused a bit of a scene in the temple, upsetting the money changers' tables, and upsetting the religious leaders. The ordinary people seemed to hang on his words, listening to his teaching and believing that he was someone special because of the way he helped and healed people. Nicky hung around at the back, listening out of curiosity, then out of genuine interest, and now in confusion.

So, Nicky decided to visit Jesus and find out more, and waited until it was night, for when else was there time and quiet to engage in good conversation? That way, fewer people would see them, too. Nicky wasn't quite sure what question to ask, knocking on the door. So, sitting down with Jesus, Nicky thought of a statement instead.

**Voice 2 (Nicky):** "Teacher, we know you must be from God. No one could do the wonderful things you do unless God was with him."

**Narrator:** Jesus smiled.

**Voice 3 (Jesus):** "I tell you honestly, no one can see God at work without being born from above."

**Narrator:** Nicky was still confused – maybe it was time for a question!

**Nicky:** “I’m becoming old! How could I possibly be born a second time?”

**Jesus:** “Really, to be part of God’s realm, you need to be born of the Spirit and flesh! It’s a bit like the wind, blowing here and there. You don’t know where it comes from or where it is going, but you hear it and see it all right. The realm of God is like that: you can’t see where it starts or where it will end, but you can know you are part of it.”

**Nicky:** “How can it be?”

**Narrator:** Nicky was puzzled. Jesus responded with a twinkle in his eye.

**Jesus:** “Is this one of Israel’s great teachers without an answer to these questions? Truly, I can only tell you what I have known and seen. You, teachers, find it so hard to accept. What if I tried to tell you about the God-life beyond? Only the Son of God has been there. That’s where he has come from and where he is going. Our stories of faith are models for life, encouraging you to trust in the Son of God.

“Do you know how much God loves the world and its people? So very, very much. So much as to give what is most precious, to share the very God-life with those who have faith. God didn’t send the Son to put people down but to give them life and wholeness! God’s right in front of you! Have faith!”

**Narrator:** Nicky felt overwhelmed as they listened to Jesus. They couldn’t think of a question or an answer. But their heart was filled with a surge of hope and peace, trust and wonder; Nicky realized how little they knew about God and how much they wanted to know. Nicky felt like a beginner, as if they were starting all over again. Then everything seemed to click into place – was this what Jesus meant by being born anew?

### **Prayer after Scripture**

Let us pray: Spirit, you lead us into the night. Sometimes the darkness is scary; sometimes it brings peace. In the stillness of the night, help us come to you. Let us experience you in ways we have not before. As we wrestle with the questions of our lives, help us know what really matters. Amen.

### **Message: “The Courage to Trust”**

*The message will be posted on the website when it is available.*

### **Poem: (Read by Diane Trollope)**

*Seeking: How do we begin again?* by Sarah A. Speed, SanctifiedArt.org

How do we begin again? Do we slide into something new?  
Do we make a formal announcement?  
Dearest reader, I have decided to begin again.  
Do we turn gradually, a gentle yield in a new direction; or like a wave,  
do we crash onto the shore of a new day?  
Do we grieve the change? Are there breadcrumbs on the path?  
Will Nicodemus be there? Will it ever be easy?  
I’m not sure exactly how we begin again,  
but I know that moths wrap themselves in silk,  
and after quite some time, after many long nights, after days spent alone,  
they break out of their shell.  
They pull themselves out under open sky,  
and they spend the rest of their days chasing the light.  
Maybe it’s always that way with beginnings.  
Maybe it feels like the protective layer falling away.  
Maybe we have to go it alone at first.

Maybe it feels like pulling and dragging yourself into something new.  
Maybe there's always open sky at the other end.

### **Minute for Local Mission**

Lorrie Leger, who will talk about the Sudbury Secondary School Value Vault.

### **Offering Moment**

Thank you for sharing both your talents and treasures. Your donations will help St. Andrew's to partner with people who help the most vulnerable downtown. Giving to the United Church of Canada's Mission and Service allows us collectively to reach out to Ukraine and other places needing love and community. Thank you for all you do!!

### **Communion Hymn: VU 469 *We Gather Here***

1. We gather here in Jesus' name,  
his love is burning in our hearts like living flame;  
for through the loving son God fashions us as one:  
Come take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.  
No one is a stranger here, everyone belongs;  
finding our forgiveness here, we in turn forgive all wrongs.

2. He joins us here, he breaks the bread,  
the One who pours the cup is risen from the dead;  
the One we love the most is now our gracious host:  
Come take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.  
We are now a family of which Christ is the head;  
though unseen he meets us here in the breaking of the bread.

3. We'll gather soon where angels sing;  
we'll see the glory of our Lord and coming King;  
now we anticipate the feast for which we wait:  
Come take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.

### **Dedication Prayer**

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.

### **Sacrament of Communion**

#### **Invitation to the Table**

Friends, if we are honest with ourselves and with God,  
we are all seeking something.  
Some of us long for a place to belong.  
Others seek permission to be who we are made to be.  
Some of us are hungry for connection, hungry for justice,  
or hungry for a glimpse of the Divine.  
No matter what it is your soul longs for,  
there is good news to be found here.  
Friends, this is Christ's table.  
We are the guests.  
He is the host.

There is a seat here with your name on it.  
Thanks be to God for a love like that.  
God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.  
**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

God of the lost and the found,  
surely it is right for us to give our thanks and praise;  
for day after day we look for you,  
and day after day we find you:  
in the laughter of children,  
in the sun rising over the horizon,  
in the flowers of spring.

Our seeking does not go unanswered,  
and for that we are grateful.  
So first and foremost, we come to you in prayer to say thank you,  
for when we're seeking beauty,  
you give us mountains and freckles, green eyes and brown eyes.  
When we we're looking for reason to hope,  
you give us rainbows after the storm, and candles flickering in the window.  
When we're seeking peace,  
you give us three-part harmony and the sound of the rain.  
And when we're seeking justice,  
your life reminds us that everyone is welcome at your Table, and none shall be turned away.

For all these reminders we are deeply grateful.  
And yet, gracious God, our seeking does not stop.  
For even though your fingerprints are all over this world,  
we are not yet at your promised day.

So, in addition to our gratitude, we also pray today for conviction.  
Do not let us get comfortable with half-hearted seeking.  
Do not let us grow numb to the suffering of this world.  
Make us relentless in our pursuit of justice—  
relentless in our consoling of the grieving,  
in our welcoming of the stranger,  
and in the feeding of the hungry.

Your beloved, Jesus, was born among us, breaking the bonds of greed and hate. So, with those  
who do not fear the good news which he brought, we lift our voices in glad shouts of joy:

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God who shows the way.**

**Creation joins in praises to you.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who knows your mind.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

He came proclaiming your salvation, God of Holiness, your child of salt and light. For those held  
within the shadow of grief and mourning, he brought light. For those whose lives have crumble  
around them, he rebuilds their hopes. For those who are separated by the chasms of fears, he  
stretches a bridge so they can meet each other in harmony. For all who face death's uncertainty,  
he went into that unknown, coming forth to reassure us that its power had been broken.

As we seek to see him in our midst, as we try to hear your Word of life, we trust in that faith which  
is mysterious:

**Christ died, showing us the way to death;**

**Christ was raised, showing us the way to new life;**

**Christ will come, to show us the way to your heart.**

Let us remember together that vision of God's reign shown to us in Jesus at table:

**he shared food with followers and friends,**

with saints and sinners,

**with crowds of thousands on the hillside,**

and a few friends in an upper room.

**On the night before he died,**

**he had supper with his companions.**

He took a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying:

**"Take, eat. Do this in remembrance of me."**

Then, he took a cup, and after giving thanks,

he passed it among them, saying:

**"Drink this. Do this in remembrance of me."**

Through this loaf and cup, Jesus lives within us.

**In word and deed, Jesus lives among us.**

### **Prayers of Community**

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. We pray for those we care about, near and far, loved ones and strangers who need our prayers and our love so much... (*silence*)

In the faith, hope, and love of Christ, we pray: until your promised day, we will pray. Until your promised day, we will seek, saying a new version of the prayer that Jesus taught us...

### **The Prayer that Jesus Taught**

**Loving Creator, we honor you, and we honor all that you have made. Renew the whole world in the image of your love. Give us what we need for today, and a hunger to see the whole world fed. Strengthen us for what lies ahead; heal us from the hurts of the past; give us courage to follow your call in this moment. For your love is the only power, the only home, the only honor we need, in this world and in the world to come. Amen.**

Here at the Table of grace, as Holy Spirit proclaims life, we ask you, Creator, to transform these simple gifts and the people gathered physically and virtually. As we taste the hope in the broken bread, equip us to go out to help break the bonds of injustice. As we are filled with the cup, ignite

our hearts that we might shine with hope and love. May this meal be the nourishment we need to continue seeking you in the world. Amen.

### **We Share in Communion**

Bread of generosity, for all of our journeys. (Break Bread)

The Cup of Blessing, the vine of God's covenant  
with all God's Children. (Pour Juice)

These are the Gifts of God, for God's Children. All are welcome. Come for all is made ready.

### **Choir only: VU 472 *O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts* (While Communion is being served.)**

1. O Jesus, joy of loving hearts,  
the fount of life, the light of all  
from every bliss that earth imparts  
we turn, unfilled, to hear your call.
2. Your truth unchanged has ever stood;  
you plead with all to call on you,  
to those who seek you, you are good,  
to those who find you, life is new.
3. We taste your ever-living bread,  
and long to feast upon you still;  
we drink of you, the fountainhead,  
our thirsting souls from you we fill.
4. O Jesus, ever with us stay;  
make all our moments calm and bright;  
chase the bleak night of sin away;  
shed o'er the world your holy light.

### **Prayer after Communion**

**God of manna and mustard seeds, we came to this Table hungry and we leave feeling full—  
full of hope, full of promise, full of what could be.**

**For we not only found glimpses of you at this Table, but we caught a glimpse of the way  
things could be: in a meal where all are welcomed and all are fed. Is there anything holier  
than that? So thank you for nourishing our curiosity alongside our spirit and our  
conviction.**

**May we always seek you the way you seek after us. With grateful hearts we pray, amen.**

### **Closing Hymn: VU 633 *Bless Now, O God, the Journey***

1. Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,  
the path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.  
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,  
then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.
2. Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way,  
whose hope burns through the terrors, whose love sustains the day.  
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound.  
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.
3. Divine, Eternal Lover, you meet us on the road.  
We wait for lands of promise where milk and honey flow.  
But waiting not for places, you meet us all around.  
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.



## Blessing

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.

## Choral Blessing: VU 429 *May the Blessing of God Be Upon You* (Choir only)

May the blessing of God be upon you.  
May God's love light all your way.  
May the grace of Christ enfold you  
and peace around you stay.  
May the Spirit of God dwell within you.  
May you live in joy each day.

## Postlude

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**Inviting Holy Light** written by Ruth Burgess, Wild Goose Publications, [www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com).

**Nurturing Safe Space** written by Alison Warner-Smith, inspired by Canadian Shield Regional Council *Safe Space Statement*. [canadianshieldrc.ca](http://canadianshieldrc.ca)

**Acknowledging Traditional Territory** adapted from an acknowledgment written by Jeanne Wilson, [Gathering.ca](http://Gathering.ca), Lent, Easter 2023, Year A.

**Call to Worship, scripture reading introductions, Seeking: How do we begin again?** poem, and **Prayer After Communion** written by Rev. Sarah A. Speed, © A Sanctified Art LLC, [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

**Opening Prayer** written by David Sparks, [Gathering.ca](http://Gathering.ca), Lent, Easter 2023, Year A.

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**Prayer After Scripture Readings, Dedication Prayer, Prayers of Community, and Blessing** from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. Lent, Easter, Year A. March 5, 2023. © 2023 Wood Lake Books Inc.

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**Prayer that Jesus Taught** paraphrased by Sarah Dylan Breuer, [sarahlaughed.net](http://sarahlaughed.net)

**Thank you to:** Rev. Dave Le Grand for leading worship; Gordon Brown and Ralph McIntosh for their musical leadership; Jacqueline, Alison, and James Warner-Smith for reading the scriptures; Suzanne Nykilchyk for assisting with liturgy preparation; Jen Bruneau for assisting with graphics for the PowerPoint presentation; Myfawny McIntosh for arranging the Sunday readers; Jen Bruneau, Maureen McGuinness, and Suzanne Nykilchyk for the sanctuary décor; and Mallon Appianing and Roger Pile in the audiovisual booth.

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