



March 22, 2020  
Fourth Sunday of Lent

*A family of faith ministering together  
in the name of Jesus Christ*

**Ministers: Each of us Assisted by Rev. Mark Perry**

**Organist: Kathy Limon**

**We Gather In God's Presence**

**Candle Liturgy**

*(written by Sue Browning. **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2013, pg. 57. Used with permission.)*

Today is the fourth Sunday of Lent. Lent is a time to think about the things that block us from following God's way of loving and caring for this world and one another. Today we will extinguish our fourth Lenten candle. This candle represents pride. As the candle is extinguished, let us pray in silence for God to remove any pride within us and in our world that makes us feel more important than others and stops us from asking for God's help when we need it.

*(extinguish candle, moment of silent reflection)*

Knowing that God accepts us for who we are, but loves us into who we can be, let us join together in this song,

**Gathering In Song MV 85 "Take, O Take Me as I Am" (repeat)**

Take, O take me as I am;  
summon out what I shall be;  
set your seal upon my heart  
and live in me

**Life and Work of the Congregation – see page 13...**

**Call to Worship**

Jesus calls us to worship God in spirit and in truth,

**yet we stumble around like the blind in an obstacle course.**

Jesus offers us new vision and new hope.

**Lord, we were blind and now we see. In You we believe.**

Let us worship the Lord our God.

**\*Hymn VU 264 "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"**

- 1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise;  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes;  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.
- 2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;  
thy justice like mountains high soaring above  
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

- 3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;  
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;  
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,  
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.
- 4 Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light;  
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
all praise we would render, O help us to see  
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee!

**Opening Prayer** (*unison*)

Holy One, from the mud of the earth you formed us, and with the breath of your Spirit you made us living beings. You created light, and life, and sight, yet how easily we lose sight of your eternal realm and your Way for our lives; how easily we are drawn to the dark corners of the world instead of to your light; how easily we utter words of bitterness and condemnation and death, and not words of blessing and life. Have mercy on us and lead us to the still waters of your grace and the healing garden of your heart, Tender Shepherd. Restore our sight to see you living with us. Restore our hope that we might trust you. Restore our speech that we might praise you for all the blessings you bestow upon us. This we ask in the name of the one who is both Lamb and Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**We Are Blessed By God**

**Time for the Young and the Young** 

*hide a small cross*

Do you see anything new? Sometimes we look at things, but we don't see them because we aren't paying attention.

*OT version based on 1 Samuel 16:1-13*

(This happened in the time of King Saul too. Even the priest, Samuel, looked at others and saw their appearance, but did not see as God saw, did not see their heart, at least not until God revealed it to him.)

*NT version based on John 9:1-41*

(This happened when Jesus lived on earth too. Lots of people saw him and didn't know that he was the messiah, God's anointed. One man was blind and couldn't see Jesus, but he heard about him and Jesus healed him. The man could see for the first time in his life. When he looked at Jesus, he could see him the same as everyone else, but he could also see what others couldn't. He could see, knew in his heart that Jesus was God's anointed one; that Jesus loved him and would always be with him.)

*Show where the cross is hiding*

Now that you looked at this cross, it's easy for you to see it. You know where to look. You can also know that Jesus is with you all the time when you know who he is. He is God's anointed. He is the one who loves you and the one who listens to your prayers. You may not be able to see him with your eyes, but you can see him with your heart.

God, thank you for revealing to our hearts that you are with us always. Help us never forget you are with us, especially when we are frightened. Amen.

**Hymn VU 605** “Jesus, Teacher, Brave and Bold”

- 1 Jesus, teacher, brave and bold,  
let us serve you, young and old.  
Let us faith-filled workers be,  
all around, your wisdom see.  
Let us play and dance and sing,  
your goodness find in everything.
- 2 Jesus, friend, so strong and true,  
show us good, brave work to do.  
Show us those who need a friend,  
all things broken help us mend.  
Free our minds and stretch our care,  
teach us to serve you everywhere.

**Introit to Prayer VU 948** “O God, Hear My Prayer”

O God, hear my prayer, O God hear my prayer; when I call answer me.  
O God, hear my prayer, O God hear my prayer; come and listen to me.

**Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**  
**& The Lord’s Prayer** (*spoken*)

God of all seasons, in your pattern of things there is a time for keeping and a time for losing; a time for building up and a time for pulling down; a time for mourning and a time for laughing; a time for dying and a time for healing. In this season of covid-19, be with the world and all in it according to the need of each. In this holy season of Lent, as we journey to the cross, help us to discern in our lives what we must lay down and what we must take up; what we must end and what we must begin. Be with all those who mourn. Grant them comfort and peace, especially we remember the friends and family of Renee Furler (3).....

Be with all those who are sick or dying, awaiting medical treatment or recovering from medical intervention, especially we think of Ron Dickie, Marlene Smith, Tyler Brooks, Ken Brooks, Randy and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts...

Grant healing where you would have healing, and where healing is not your will, grant comfort and peace. Be with all those others in our community and around the world who need your presence; especially this week we think of the people of the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia.

Finally, give us grace to lead a disciplined life, in glad faithfulness and with the joy which comes from a closer walk with Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, and who taught us to pray, saying,

Our Father,  
which 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 sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us;  
And lead us not into temptation;  
But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
Forever and ever.  
Amen.

## **Minute for Mission**

### **Protecting a Child's Rights**

Emmanuel Dennis Ngongo was 13 years old when he came across the Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children's Rights (KAACR) through his school's Child's Rights Club. KAACR is a long-standing Mission & Service global partner. When his parents were transferred to another district and he had to change schools, Emmanuel wrote to KAACR to get help in launching a new club. Kenya has dire statistics on violence against children. Rape, abuse, and child labour occur widely in both rural and urban areas. For many young people, the situation is made worse by their inability to speak out at school or within their communities. KAACR, a network organization established nearly two decades ago, serves as a platform for like-minded youth to engage in communications and advocacy on ending violence against children in Kenya. Using channels such as WhatsApp and social media, KAACR has reached at least 200 young men and women, many of whom have amazing stories to tell about their transformation. They share ideas and propel change at regional, national, and international levels. Their primary mandate is to champion children's rights everywhere; they believe every child should be protected. Emmanuel was so inspired by his experiences with KAACR that he launched the Child's Rights Defenders Movement with other peers in 1999, which was hosted by KAACR. He later worked for KAACR as an advocate protecting girls from female genital mutilation and early marriage, and in general youth development work, where he coordinated Youth Employment Summit sessions in Kenya and throughout Africa. If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.

### **Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

God has blessed us with the gift of life. God walks with us, on the high plateaus, and in the dark valleys of our life. In gratitude for all that God has blessed us with, and for God's constant presence with us, let us joyfully praise God with our tithes and offerings.

#### **\*Offertory Hymn: VU 218 "We Praise You, O God"**

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;

In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.

We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;

We bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

#### **\*Prayer of Dedication**

Good Shepherd, you seek us and all your lost sheep. Use these gifts as your rod and staff to comfort and guide the weary to your pastures, to bind up those who are broken hearted, and strengthen those who are weak, to feed those who hunger and bring sight to the blind. Amen.

## **Psalm 23**

Psalm 23 – copy and paste in your browser to listen/sing along with (lyrics appear on screen)....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0kxWXHETIU>

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:1-13 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

David Anointed as King

**16** The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." **2** Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" **3** Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." **4** Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" **5** He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

**6** When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD."<sup>[a]</sup> **7** But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." **8** Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." **9** Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." **10** Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." **11** Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." **12** He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." **13** Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

*For those of you who are interested, the Epistle for this week is **Ephesians 5:8-14** and the gospel is **John 9:1-41***

**\*Hymn VU 371 "Open My Eyes"**

- 1      Open my eyes, that I may see  
          glimpses of truth thou hast for me;  
          place in my hands the wonderful key  
          that shall unclasp and set me free.  
                Silently now I wait for thee,  
                ready, my God, thy will to see.  
                Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!
  
- 2      Open my ears, that I may hear  
          voices of truth thou sendest clear;  
          and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,  
          everything false will disappear.  
                Silently now I wait for thee,  
                ready, my God, thy will to see.  
                Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

3 Open my mouth, and let me bear  
gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
open my heart and let me prepare  
love with thy children thus to share.  
Silently now I wait for thee,  
ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

**Meditation:** “The Sighted Are Blind”

In the days before there were kings in Israel Samuel, son of Hannah and Elkanah, was the high priest and judge of Israel. When he was full of years, but before he went to sleep with his ancestors, he made his sons, Joel and Abijah judges over Israel as his successors. But they were corrupt and perverted justice, so the people begged Samuel to make a king to rule over them. Against his better judgement and God’s warning, Samuel anointed Saul, son of Kish, to be king over the people of Israel. Now it came to pass that Saul did not fully obey the word of God given him by Samuel, and on that day God rejected Saul as king and selected another to rule Israel. God sent Samuel to Bethlehem (*literally The House of Bread*) to a man named Jesse, for Samuel was to anoint one of Jesse’s sons to be king over Israel.

Jesse brought his sons, one by one, in front of Samuel, and Samuel looked upon them. The first, Eliab, was a fine strapping young man. Tall, strong, handsome as they come. This is the kind of man Samuel would have chosen as a husband for a daughter, if he’d had one. But God said Eliab wasn’t the one. The other sons were just as strong, just as handsome, and just as rejected by God. After all of Jesse’s sons who were in the house at that time had passed before Samuel, and God still hadn’t selected one of them, Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons. Jesse indicated there was only the youngest left, and he was minding the flock in the hills. Samuel directed Jesse to send for his youngest son.

While they awaited the arrival of Jesse’s final son Samuel thought to himself that surely God would not choose the youngest. That wasn’t how things were done. The eldest was who God should have chosen. He was tall, strong, handsome, and reportedly he was clever as well, and most importantly, he was the eldest. He couldn’t see anything wrong with choosing Eliab. What was God thinking? Nevertheless, he was only a priest, and God was God, and God’s ways are inscrutable.

When the youngest arrived his cheeks were flush with colour from being outdoors, his eyes bright with intellect and beautiful to behold. The lad was handsome. Even more important than that, God said he was the one. Samuel anointed him on the spot, in front of Jesse’s entire household. And the spirit of God fell upon the lad known as David. One day he would be Saul’s successor, the second king of Israel, the one loved by the people of Israel to this very day.

Why did Samuel not understand that Eliab was not the one? Because he was looking at surface things. Samuel looked at Eliab’s stature. Samuel looked at Eliab’s physical appearance. Samuel looked at Eliab’s rank in birth order. Samuel looked at all of the outward signs by which we people judge things. But Samuel, while sighted, was blind to the things that God was considering. God was looking beyond the surface things. God was looking at the heart, which in that time included not just emotion but will as well. God knew that David was a man who sought after God’s own heart, God’s own will, God’s own desires and yearnings.

Samuel was blind to what mattered to God. The question is, who and what are we blind to?

For instance, when we look at the church building, do we see a building that belongs to us – some sort of private clubhouse? Or do we see it as our Methodist forebears did – a place that belonged not to them, but that belonged to God (and the denomination) – a place not for themselves, for their generation, but for all the generations who followed after them – a place not for their own benefit, but a place from which to serve the community at large, a place from which to start building the kingdom of God, on earth as in heaven. Or do we see something else? What do you see?

When we look at the community at large, do we see ministry opportunities; or do we see people who could be filling the pews and the coffers and the many roles and jobs around the church? Or do we see something else? What do you see?

Here's another question to consider. When God looks at us, what does God see?

Does God see a people whose hearts are burning for respect for all people – those not like us, indigenous peoples, sex trade workers, drug addicts, the homeless etc.?

Does God see a people whose hearts are burning for justice – fairness and equity for all people, including our enemies, and those of other skin colours, abilities, sexual orientation, nationalities, cultures, religions, etc.?

Does God see a people whose hearts are burning to be a blessing for all of life on this planet – God's creation?

And, what is God blind to? Or maybe, more accurately, what is God willing to turn a blind eye to?

The physical attributes about ourselves that we don't like – the crooked nose, the knobby knees, the big ears, the .....

Or maybe, more importantly, our faults, our shortcomings, our sins – the things we've said and done that have hurt others, whether intentionally or not.

As we continue on our Lenten journey towards Easter, towards the promise of resurrection, of new life, may we consider the people and things we have grown blind to; and may we consider the things in ourselves that we'd like God to turn a blind eye to.

I invite you to send me a note at [revcmarperry@gmail.com](mailto:revcmarperry@gmail.com) with your answers to the questions, your ponderings, your epiphanies....

They will remain confidential, unless you want them shared to spur discussion.

**We Go Forth, Serving God**

**\*Hymn VU 642 "Be Thou My Vision"**

- 1 Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;  
naught be all else to me save that thou art,  
thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;  
I ever with thee, and thou in my life;  
thou loving parent, thy child may I be,  
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
- 3 Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight  
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,  
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;  
raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 Great God of heaven, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

**\*Commissioning and Benediction**

Go. Take the love of God into the world.

**We go, guiding the unseeing to God's grace.**

Go. Take the grace of Jesus into the world.

**We go, gathering others to join us by the quiet waters of peace.**

Go. Take the community of the Spirit into the world.

**We go, working to restore the lives of all whom we meet.**

Go in peace.

**Amen.**

Based on the work of Thom M. Shuman (c) 2017. Used with permission.

**\*Sung Response: "Go Now In Peace"**

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.  
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.  
Know He will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others so all the world can see.  
God will be there supporting us with love.  
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Psalm 23 (a modern paraphrase)

The Lord and I are in a shepherd-sheep relationship,  
and I am in a position of negative need.

He prostrates me in a green-belt grazing area,  
and conducts me into lateral proximity  
with a non-torrential aqueous accumulation.

He restores to original satisfaction levels  
my psychological makeup.

Notwithstanding the fact  
that I make ambulatory progress  
through the non-illuminated geological interstices of mortality,  
terror sensations shall not be manifest within me  
due to the proximity of omnipotence.

Your pastoral walking aid and quadruped restraint module  
induce in me a pleasurable mood state.

You design and produce a nutrient bearing support structure  
in the context of non-cooperative elements.

You enact a head-related folk ritual utilizing vegetable extracts,  
and my beverage container exhibits  
inadequate volumetric parameters.

Surely it must be an intrinsic, non-deductible factor  
that your inter-relational, emphatic,  
and non-vengeful attributes will pursue me  
as their target focus  
for the duration of the current non-death period.

And I will possess tenant rights  
in the residential facility of the Lord  
on a permanently open-ended time basis.

Author unknown,  
but definitely had too much time on their hands.

## **Announcements.....**

March 28 Dessert and Games night – CANCELLED

April 5 Congregational Meeting of Union United Church  
BEFORE worship at 9:30. Worship begins at 10:30 a.m. HOPEFULLY

The **second Sunday of every month** is the deadline for ordering the Shopping cards. Cards will delivered the following Sunday.  
Suspended until we return to church services.

Financial Summary for January and February 2020

	<b>General</b>			<b>M &amp; S</b>	
	Income	Fundraising	Expenses	Income	Goal
Jan	\$ 3,058		\$ 7,631	\$ 762	\$ 584
Feb	5,013	\$ 1,064	8,707	1,167	584
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8,071</b>	<b>\$ 1,064</b>	<b>\$16,338</b>	<b>\$ 1,929</b>	<b>\$1,168</b>