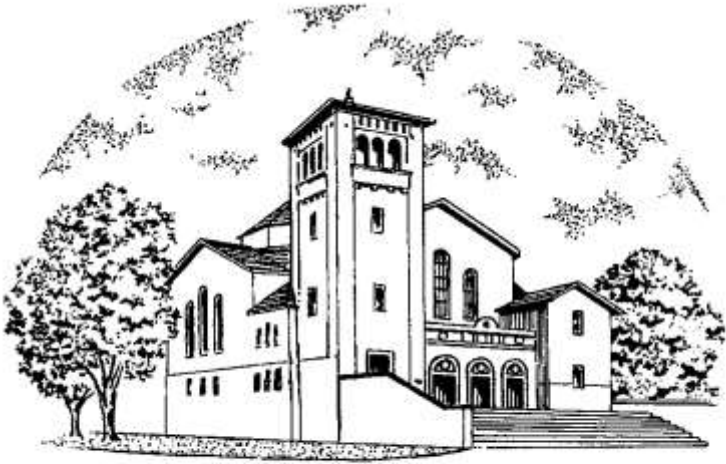


Cochrane Street United Church

81 Cochrane Street ♦ St. John's, NL ♦ A1C 3L7



February 25th, 2024
2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Guest Presider: Rev. Karen Bursey
Minister Emeritus: Rev. Eric Hillier
Minister of Music: Patricia Young
Director of Music: Tristan Cleveland-Thompson
Technical Operations: John Williams, Jackabon Media

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GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

*please stand as you are able

**bold is in unison

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, and the island of Newfoundland as the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. We would also like to recognize the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut and the Innu of Nitassinan, and their ancestors, as the original people of Labrador. We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together.

PRELUDE:

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please see your congregational email for detailed announcements.

INTROIT VU # 405: New Every Morning (vs. 1)

1 New every morning is the love
our wakening and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life, and power, and thought.

LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE & PASSING OF THE PEACE:

The light of Christ is with us.

Here. Now. In this place.

In Christ, although we are many, we are one.

Let our hospitality towards each other reflect God's love.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

*REFLECTIVE MUSIC VU # 256: O God beyond All Praising (vs. 1)

1 O God beyond all praising, we worship you today
and sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
for we can only wonder at every gift you send,
at blessings without number and mercies without end:
we lift our hearts before you and wait upon your word,
we honour and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Lent calls us to journey, this and every day,
following Jesus wherever he leads us.

Lent calls us to journey:

to the place where God covenants with us.

Lent calls us to worship together,
to tell future generations the good news.

**Lent calls us to practice justice,
to bring God's hope to all people.**

Lent calls us to faithful living,
to trust the One who gives us life.

**Lent calls each of us to take up our cross,
to trust the One who bears it with us.**

Lent calls us to journey with God.

**Let us worship God, who walks with us,
this and every day.**

PRAYER OF APPROACH:

You always act in ways which surprise us, God of our parents.

Choosing an aged, barren couple to parent your holy people;

calling us to set aside ourselves and to shoulder a cross;

**showering us with love and mercy,
when we do nothing to deserve these gifts.**

In hospital rooms, where we wait in anxious expectation;

in classrooms, where we chew on pencils while taking tests;

in this unholy mess we call life:

you always call us to faithfulness and trust.

In the warmth of spring's approach, we hear your voice;

in the moonlight of winter's last night, we see your face;

in the silence of a child sleeping, we breathe in your grace:

**May we see you, hear you, and know you are always with us
even in the ordinary moments of life**

as we move through this Lenten season. Amen

***HYMN :**

To Abraham and Sarah

634 VU

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God of Sarah and Abraham, in this holy place, we know how weak is our discipleship. We can spend hours at the computer, but only give you fleeting moments of our time. We can talk endlessly on our cell phones, but fall silent when it comes to sharing our fears, our worries, our hopes with you. We seek quick fixes for our problems, rather than seeking your vision and future for our lives.

God of Peter, Paul, and the psalmist, forgive us: for our lack of trust; for our faithless living; for closing our ears to the call of Jesus.

Forgive us, so we may lay aside all that keeps us from you, so we may take up the life you offer to us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Silence is kept

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

This is the good news: God does not go back on the promises made so long ago. God does not reject us, God redeems us. God does not withhold love, God pours it into our barren lives.

Forgiven of our sins, filled with hope, living in relationship with God and one another - we are a new people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

LEARNING TOGETHER:

OFFERING INVITATION & VOLUNTARY

***OFFERTORY HYMN VU #537: Your Work O God, Needs Many Hands**

1 Your work, O God, needs many hands
to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve
unless our gifts we share.

2 Because we love you and your work,
our offering now we make:
be pleased to use it as your own,
we ask for Jesus' sake.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

May these gifts represent our willingness to deny ourselves, so others might be blessed by your grace, your peace, as well as your hope, in every moment of their lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

GOD'S WORD FOR US TODAY

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Eternal God,
in the reading of the scripture, may your Word be heard;
in the meditations of our hearts, may your Word be known;
and in the faithfulness of our lives, may your Word be shown.
Amen

SCRIPTURE READING Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16

The covenant between Abram, Sarai, and God

The Word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God.**

Reader: Paula Reynolds

*RESPONSIVE PSALM Psalm 22: 23–31, VU # 746, Part 3–4

You have not hidden your face, O God

Reader: Paula Reynolds

SCRIPTURE READING Romans 4: 13–25

God's promise rests on grace and faith

The Word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God.**

Reader: Heather McMaster

GOSPEL READING Mark 8: 31–38

Jesus predicts his death. Those who lose their life for the gospel will save it.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ – **Thanks be to God.**

*HYMN: **Take up Your Cross** **# 561 VU**

SERMON:

ANTHEM: I give you a new commandment, *by Peter Aston*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday,	FEBRUARY 25	CSUC – Rev. Karen Bursey
Sunday,	MARCH 03	CSUC – Rev. James Ravenscroft COMMUNION
Sunday,	MARCH 10	CSUC – Bert Riggs
Sunday,	MARCH 17	CSUC – Rev. Miriam Bowlby
Sunday,	MARCH 24	CSUC Service @ St. James UC PALM SUNDAY
Sunday,	MARCH 31	CSUC – Rev. Peggy Johnson EASTER SUNDAY / COMMUNION

ANNOUNCEMENTS: If you wish to have an announcement included in the bulletin, please have it into the office by Thursday at noon.

NO SCENTS MAKES GOOD SENSE! A friendly reminder that members of our congregation are sensitive to scented products. Thank you for helping create a safe environment in which we can all fully participate.

PARKING ON SUNDAYS: If the Bannerman parking lot is full when you arrive, there MAY be parking available at Stewart Avenue that's behind the building previously known as the College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (CRNNL).

PASTORAL COVERAGE FOR CSUC: Rev. Peggy Johnson is covering all pastoral emergencies and funerals. She can be reached at (709) 685-9223 or by email at peggyjoanjohnson@hotmail.com. If Rev. Peggy is not available, please contact Paula Reynolds at pt2reynolds@gmail.com.

PILOT PROJECT WITH ST. JAMES: Our pilot project with St. James will formally commence on Sunday, March 3rd, 2024. *Tim Reynolds*
Chair, Church Council

UPCOMING RENOVATION: First Light received a grant from Service NL to renovate the washroom near the Minister's office to make it fully accessible – lowered sink, leveled floor, button on the door, and a nice face lift! Renovations will begin on Monday, February 26, 2024, and should be finished in two weeks. In the meantime, there are washrooms available near the community hall / event space.

NEXT MEETING OF CSUC CHURCH COUNCIL is scheduled for Tuesday, February 27, 2024, via ZOOM. If anyone has a matter they wish to bring to the attention of Council, please contact Tim Reynolds at pt2reynolds@gmail.com.

TAX RECEIPTS A big thank you to our volunteers for all the work involved! February 25 tax receipts will be available for pick up at the back of the church. Please help us save on delivery costs by bringing envelopes to those who live in your neighbourhood. Your help is very much appreciated! If you have not received yours by the end of February, please let the office know (709-722-3023, info@cochranestreetuc.com).

BRIDGES TO HOPE ITEM OF THE MONTH: For each month of 2024, Bridges To Hope will be suggesting a much needed food item for members of our partner congregations to consider for donation. For **FEBRUARY**, we are suggesting 1L OF JUICE. Of course other non-perishable items are always welcome. **MARCH**'s item of the month is beans.

St. James Outreach and Action Committee is discerning a future initiative of offering ESL/EFL classes (English as a second or foreign language conversation classes). This is an awesome opportunity to train for that! Call Tom Dawe for details at 738-397 or check the following website www.teachersonwheels.ca.

St. James – Make Your Lent Green: This year we are using a green lens as we explore the readings for each Sunday in Lent. Why not make your whole Lent green? One way to do this is to follow the suggestions by A Rocha, a Christian environmental organisation started in the UK. Here is a link to their UK website: <https://arocha.org.uk/go-green-for-lent/>

St. James United Church Events:

Mar 3 3pm Wild Light Spiritual Oasis Eco-Spirituality Group

Mar 3 7pm Taize prayer

For details contact james@stjamesuc.org.

Wild Light Spiritual Oasis that was originally set to take place on February 25th, 3pm.

St. James – Reflective Thursdays at 12:30: Each Thursday throughout Lent, (Rev.) James will lead an informal communion service in the Fellowship Room. Communion is at 12:30PM, followed by the the sharing of lunch. Bring a bag lunch if you wish and have lunch together!

St. James – Lent is the Grace to Grieve, by Joan Chittister: Lent is that season of the church year that is most commonly associated with penance. But there is a danger lurking in that definition. The scripture for the opening of Lent, Joel 2:12-18, takes us back to a time of great danger. Joel says "Rend your hearts and not your clothing." Lent is a call to weep for what we could have been and are not. Lent is the grace to grieve for what we should have done and did not. Lent is the opportunity to change what we ought to change but have not. Lent is not about penance. Lent is about becoming, doing and changing whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now. Lent is a summons to live anew.

MISSION AND SERVICE: Our Mission and Service partner, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), has been providing ongoing help to people in Türkiye and Syria living in the aftermath of the February 2023 earthquakes. A Cash Assistance program has been life-changing for families, especially those who do not have a steady or fixed income. Your gifts to Mission and Service extend a loving hand of peace and warmth to those in need. Thank you for your generosity. More information here:

<https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/get-involved/mission-and-service>