

First United Church, Wetaskiwin

March 25, 2012

5th Sunday in Lent

As the heart calls, we seek reconciliation with God and with one another. What about God is written on your heart?

** Please stand as you are able*

WELCOME

NEWS OF INTEREST -

COMING CLOSE TO THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Breathe deeply of the Spirit's presence.

*** GATHERING MUSIC #374 VU - "Come and find the Quiet Centre" vs.2**

**Silence is the friend who claims us,
Cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being face to face
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking
finding scope for faith begun.**

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

Where is God? **We're listening.**
God is justice that rolls down like water.

Where is God? **We're listening.**
God is each heartbeat of life.

Where is God? **We're listening.**
God is the silence of seeds that wait to bear fruit.

Where is God? **We're listening.**
Let us worship God!

PRAYER OF APPROACH [Together]

God of seeds and abundance, shower our souls with

love. In this time of worship - unclench our lives; renew our minds; calm our fears. By your grace, transform our living. Keep us growing in Christ's way. Amen.

LIVING COVENANT - Lent 5 [red/heart]

[2 purple and Christ candle are lit before service]

One: On this fifth Sunday in Lent, we move closer to Good Friday, to Jesus' suffering and death.

Two: Through Jeremiah and Jesus, God speaks to us about a love that is deeper than hurt.

One: Jeremiah speaks of a new relationship with God, where God's promise will be written on our hearts.

Two: Jesus reminds us that even as a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it holds the promise of bearing fruit.

One: As we put out this candle, let us think about what needs to die in our lives, that we might know God's love more deeply.

[put out one purple candle]

Two: In our living, in our loving, may God's promise bear fruit.

[lay the coloured cloth on the communion table]

One: We lay this table with the colour of love ... Let us pray...

All Loving God, deeper than any hurt, stronger than death itself, your love reaches out to us. Keep us open to new possibilities. Help us to grow in your love and bear fruit in Christ's name. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE #411 VU "O God, We Call"

O God, we call, [repeat]

From deep inside we yearn [repeat]

From deep inside we yearn for you.

CHILDREN'S CIRCLE

*** HYMN #92 AGCS "One Light, One Sun"**

SCRIPTURE READINGS Jeremiah 31:31-34
John 12:20-26

MESSAGE "People of Promise"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Heart of Love... **live through us.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

* **HYMN #186 VU** - "Now the Green Blade Rises"

MINUTE FOR MISSION

SHARING GOD'S GIFTS WITH OTHERS

* **OFFERTORY VU #702 VU** - "*When a Poor One*"

**When a poor one, who has nothing,
shares with strangers;**

When the thirsty water give unto us all.

**When the wounded in their weakness strengthen
others,**

Then we know that God still goes that road with us.

Then we know that God still goes that road with us.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

HYMN #108 VU "Throughout These Lenten Days & Nights"

* **CHANGING THE LIGHT**

Now wherever you go, the Light goes with you.

* **SENDING FORTH**

God gives life, God renews life, God is life.

Celebrate the life within you and let it overflow to enliven the world. May the love of God grow within you.

May the grace of Christ encourage you;

May the power of the Holy Spirit sustain your service.

Amen.

*** COMMISSIONING #298 VU** *“When You Walk from Here”*
**When you walk from here, when you walk from here,
Walk with justice, walk with mercy,
And with God’s humble care.**

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

Where is God? **We’re listening.** *[sound of water]*

God is justice that rolls down like water.

Where is God? **We’re listening.** *[sound of heartbeat]*

God is each heartbeat of life.

Where is God? **We’re listening.** *[silence]*

God is the silence of soil that waits to bear fruit.

Where is God? **We’re listening.**

*[pre-arranged voices mic’ed and hidden - “I am with you. I
am with you. I am with you.]*

Let us worship God!

Children’s Circle

Need: A pot of earth, a greening/blooming plant, or pictures.

Look at this ... *Show them the bare earth*

I wonder what this might be? *Let the answers come without
direction. Play with it. Let them touch the dirt and feel it’s
dryness.*

Look at this ... *Show them the blooming plant*

I wonder if these are the same or different?

*Let the children talk about how the plant or bare dirt are
similar/different without making any judgement either way.*

I wonder which you like best?

Talk about some of the work it takes to get the bare earth to look like the blooming plant... if no one mentions it, talk about the seed that has to be planted, and die so that something else can grow...

Sometimes our faith is a bit like these parts of God's creation. We want to be like the blooming plant, but we aren't willing to do the work with the bare earth. Sometimes we are the bare earth, and we can't even begin to imagine what it would look like to have such life and growth and beauty. Our scripture stories today remind us that whether we are barren earth or blooming, God is at work, inviting us to grow and live and encouraging us to let go so that something new can come.

I wonder what God might be growing in you? Or in our congregation?

Close with a prayer or however you thank children for their time and invite them to return to their activities, seats or whatever they do next, while the story continues.

Prayers of the People

Heart of Love... **live through us.**

God who breathes into life its goodness, we give thanks that we are still breathing. We give thanks for the melting, splashing, sparkling of water and sunlight in this spring season. Thank you for lightness of heart, the warmth of another's touch, the tang of fresh air. When we see only darkness, when our hearts turn cold, Heart of Love... **live through us.**

Christ you call us to bear fruit in your name. We give thanks for the parents and teachers, elders and sages of our communities who share their faith so generously. We give thanks for volunteers who bring meals, make phone calls, knit prayer shawls and mittens, who visit and sing your praise in all they do. When we think only of ourselves, when we hoard your gifts.

Heart of Love... **live through us.**

Spirit disturb our world with your peace. We pray for those who are imprisoned or held hostage, for the disappeared, for the refugees and silently forgotten children of war and the sex trade. We pray for the people who try to make a difference, who offer shelter, clothing, food, and understanding. When we are tempted to despair Heart of Love... **live through us.**

Compassionate God, the needs are many, but greater still is your love. We offer our prayers to you in the name of the living Christ, who daily intercedes on our behalf. Who calls us by name and teaches us to pray together saying.. Our Father, who ...

Invitation to Share

Holy One, You write your love in our words and actions, in the work we do and the gifts we bring. The abundance of your love will now be shared through our gifts to you and to your ministry in this world.

Prayer of Blessing

God you know our hearts and our situations. Your love is not measured by the size of gift we bring. We bring these gifts before you Holy One, thankful for the abundance in our lives which enables us to share with others. Take these offerings and those give through PAR, bless the fruits of our hands and our hearts to your use. Amen.