

STITTSVILLE UNITED CHURCH

Growing Together In Spirit

4th Sunday after Epiphany January 29, 2023

WE GATHER TO PRAISE GOD

Music to Prepare for Worship:

Acknowledging the Territory - Lori VanSantvoort-Jansekovich, *Gathering A/C/E 2021-2022*, with permission Stittsville United Church is built on the traditional, unceded lands of the Anishinawbe Algonquin people. May we glean wisdom from the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders, whose footsteps from generation to generation walked gently on Turtle Island when it was all unceded land.

All: May we all travel together on a good path with harmony and respect as we move toward a healthy, peaceful future together.

Words of Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle (abridged) - G. Dunbar, *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023*, with permission One: It seems ironic that this tiny flickering Christ candle is hard to notice in the light of day, unfelt across the room or the digital divide, impossible to smell more than a short distance away or through our screens.

All: Yet we gather around this light, perceiving Christ's living presence all around us, feeling the expansive warmth of Christ's welcome in worship, inhaling the heady perfume of love alive.

Invitation to Worship

- G.

Dunbar, *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023*, with permission One: Come, to be embraced by the rainbow spectrum of God's promise, to be enfolded in the unconditional embrace of Christ's companionship, to be empowered by the Spirit's passion for right relation.

All: We come in answer to God's call, joyful to serve and to witness.

Opening Prayer (unison)

- G.

Dunbar, *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023*, with permission

In this morning light, O God, wrap us with the inspiration of night's vision. Within the restrictions we each may deal with, O Christ, free us to reach out to one another as companions along the Way. When we feel beaten down and discouraged, O Spirit, open us to your whispers of possibility empowered by faith. Amen.

* **Hymn:** MV #1 Let us build a house

Prayer of Confession

- S.

Ferguson, *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023*, with permission **God, through Christ, you shine a light in the midst of the shadows. Yet, we confess there are times when we fear this light as it reveals the brokenness within us. And so we try and hide our brokenness, fearful of how you will react to its revelation. God, forgive us, for we forget you already know who we are. Receive now our brokenness: (time of silent prayer)**

Words of Assurance

- S.

Ferguson, *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023*, with permission

Children of God, hear the Good News! Through the cross, we are reborn into the Body of Christ! The shadow of our sin is

transformed as God's light shines upon us! Let this light guide us, as we go into this world sharing our Good News!

Life and Ministry of the Church

Conversation with the Children

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Scripture: Micah 6:8 (VU #701, sung)

The Beatitudes – a litany (Matthew 5:1-12) - T.
Fergusson, *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023*, with permission

One: (a vase is placed on the communion table) When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All: We are called to be God's people and are open to receive God's holy word.

One: Then Jesus began to speak, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All sing: VU #266 Amazing Grace, verse 1

One: Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All: Comfort me, O Lord! For I am weak and lack the confidence to lead a saintly life.

One: Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All sing: VU #266 Amazing Grace, verse 2

One: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All: For God knows our every thought. God lives in the midst of God's people.

One: Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All sing: VU #266 Amazing Grace, verse 3

One: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All: God's grace is the holy love given to us unconditionally.

One: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All sing: VU #266 Amazing Grace, verse 4

One: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All: In baptism, we are called, claimed, and commissioned into the life of Christ.

One: Blessed are those who are reviled and persecuted, against whom all kinds of evil is falsely uttered on my account. (a flower is placed in the vase)

All sing: VU #266 Amazing Grace, verse 5

All: Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Amen.

Message: “What makes us happy?”

Musical Offering: ‘Grace To You’ by J.J.Smith

WE RESPOND IN FAITH

Invitation to Prayer: VU #411 O God, we call (2)

Prayers of Thanksgiving & for Healing & Transformation

The Lord’s Prayer (spoken)

* **Hymn:** MV #12 “Come, touch our hearts”

Invitation to Offer Our Gifts

* **Song of Dedication:** VU #540 ‘Grant us God’

* **Prayer of Dedication (unison)**

- B.

Steadman, *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023*, with permission

We give these gifts, God, knowing that all that we have is a gift from you. Your creative wonder surrounds us every day, and the bounties of your world enable us to share what we have received. As we give thanks for what we have, encourage us to share these gifts for the care and service of others, we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

* **Hymn:** God of Grace “VU #686 (to tune VU #651)

WE GO FORTH IN LOVING SERVICE

* **Commissioning** (from 1 Corinthians 1:18-31)

One: Friends, let us consider our own call: not many of us are wise, or powerful, or of noble birth.

All: God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. God chose the foolish to shame the wise; God chose the weak to shame the strong. So let us go from here as "fools for Christ".

*** Benediction**

*** Choral Response:** VU #974 Amen, Amen, Hallelujah, Amen

Music to Inspire Us As We Go – 'Proclaim the News' by David Paxton