

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 8, 2026



Sermon on the Mount, Laura James, 2010

We Gather in Response to God's Invitation

THE GIFT OF MUSIC TO GATHER US

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ whether you are at home or here in our sanctuary. Welcome to believers, to questioners, and to questioning believers. Welcome to young, and old, and everyone in between. To people of all colors, cultures, gifts, and abilities. No matter who you are, how you identify or whom you love, you are welcome here. For this is God's house, and God welcomes everyone.

*CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)

**An asterisk indicates when the people stand in body or spirit.*

One: People of God, why are you here?

All: We gather to worship with our hearts and our lives.

People of God, who do you worship?

We worship God, who loves us and teaches us to love.

People of God, how do you worship?

We worship God by breaking the bonds of injustice and freeing the oppressed.

People of God, come, let us worship God, whose glory surrounds us!

May our worship demonstrate God's glory in our neighborhood, community, and the whole earth.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

*OPENING PRAYER (*TOGETHER, INSPIRED BY ISAHIAH 58*)

God of compassion and justice, the worship you choose for us is to loose the bonds of injustice, to let the oppressed go free, to share bread with the hungry, to shelter the homeless poor.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn and your healing shall spring up quickly.

So, in praise and wonder, we come to worship you not just with our words but with our hearts and our lives. Glory and honor be to you, O God, Creator of a new heaven and a new earth; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Written by Rev. Iona MacLean, First Presbyterian Church, Pictou, Nova Scotia, in Change is Happening, <https://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/01/opening-prayer-worshiping-with-our-lives.html>.

*SINGING TOGETHER

“We Love Your Realm, O God” Black #312

We love your realm, O God, all places where you reign.

We recognize, with hope and joy, the world as your domain.

We love your church, O God, for Christ has given life
To form communities of love that seek to heal our strife.

We recognize, with pain, that we have not achieved
The faithfulness of our resolve when we at first believed.

Yet Christ, our friend and guide, continues to forgive,
Delivering us from our mistakes, inviting us to live.

Beyond our brokenness, we seek to know your ways
Of deep communion, solemn vows, and hymns of love and praise.

We know your truth will last. We trust your reign is sure.
Equip us for those daily tasks that help your world endure.

We Pray for Transformation and New Life

INTRODUCTION

God in God’s glory sent Jesus among us as the light of the world, to reveal God’s love for all people.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*TOGETHER*)

We confess that our sin and pride hide the brightness of your light. We turn away from the poor; we ignore cries for justice; we do not strive for peace.

Forgive us, God. In your mercy, cleanse us of our sin, and baptize us once again with your Spirit, so that, as forgiven and renewed people, we may reflect the love and life of Jesus Christ into our world.

Time for silent reflection.

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ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Our God is a God of grace and mercy and love; know that our sins have been forgiven. May we be strengthened in all goodness. Since we have been raised with Christ, let us seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Posted on the Presbyterian Church in Canada website, <http://presbyterian.ca/worship/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/08/confession-light-of-world.html>.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(As a sign of our deep fellowship and communion with God and with one another, let us personally greet one another with a handshake or peace sign and bless one another with the peace that comes from being in Christ.)

Baptized with Christ, let us also hear ourselves named as God's beloved children, called to be bearers of love, mercy, forgiveness, and peace to one another. Beloved of God, may the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

*REGATHERING SONG

“There’s a Spirit of Love in This Place” Sing! #33, v. 1 and chorus

There’s a spirit of love in this place, there’s a spirit of love in this place.

You can’t see it, but it’s there, just as precious as the air.

There’s a spirit of love in this place.

O alleluia, sing alleluia! We bless your holy name.

O alleluia, sing alleluia! There’s a spirit of love in this place.

We Hear God’s Word

MINISTRY THROUGH MUSIC

“We Praise the Lord”

by Althouse

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God, source of all light, by your Word you give light to the soul. Pour out on us the spirit of wisdom and understanding that our hearts and minds may be opened. Amen.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 58:1-12

False and true worship.

Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness

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and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments;
they want God on their side.

³“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
and oppress all your workers.

⁴You fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you;
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.”

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹The Lord will guide you continually

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and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

RESPONSIVE PSALTER READING

Blessings of the just and righteous.

¹ Praise the Lord!

Happy are those who fear the Lord,
who greatly delight in his commandments.

**² Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

**⁴ They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.**

⁵ It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

**⁶ For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.**

⁷ They are not afraid of evil tidings;
their hearts are firm, secure in the Lord.

**⁸ Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.**

⁹ They have distributed freely; they have given to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn is exalted in honor.

**¹⁰ The wicked see it and are angry;
they gnash their teeth and melt away;
the desire of the wicked comes to nothing.**

PSALM 112:1-10

GOSPEL READING:

Salt and Light; The Law and the Prophets

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

MATTHEW 5:13-20

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise to you, O Christ!

MEDITATION:

“Restoring the Light”

Pastor Dave

SINGING TOGETHER:

“You Are Salt for the Earth, O People” Black #181

You are salt for the earth, O people: salt for the reign of God!

Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the City of God!

*Refrain: Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;
Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!*

You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!

Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the City of God! [Refrain]

You are a seed of the Word, O people: bring forth the reign of God!

Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the City of God! [Refrain]

You are a blessed and a pilgrim people: bound for the reign of God!

Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the City of God! [Refrain]

We Respond to God’s Word

THANKSGIVING FOR THOSE ENDING A TIME OF SERVICE

(Members who are ending a time of service to the church are invited to come forward, including Terry Miller (Consistory)).

Gracious God, you equip us as individuals and as a congregation for every good work. And so we thank you for the faithful service given by these, our brothers and sisters in Christ, for their devotion to your church, and for the love, experience and wisdom that they have shared as leaders. We are thankful for the

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ways that they adapted to the pandemic and many other changes. We trust that you commend their service, saying “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

We pray your continued blessings on these, our brothers and sisters in Christ, during this next phase of their ministries within and beyond this church. May your Presence be with them as they discern new paths and explore new horizons. Open new doors of service that will satisfy their desire to give and that will make a lasting difference in our world.

God of all hope, we are thankful for what has been and grateful for what has yet to be. Amen.

COMMISSIONING FOR NEW LEADERSHIP

(Members who are beginning a time of service to the church are invited to come forward including Braden Gobrecht (Consistory), Kevin Baum (Planned Giving), Cindy McCoury (Stewardship & Missions), Joy Gobrecht, Bonnie Martin and Barb Senft (Delegates to Keystone Conference; Maryann Brenneman and Joyce Kain (Delegates to York Association), Chip Hoover (Alternate Delegate to York Association))
Affirmation of ministry is the act whereby a local church recognizes the diverse gifts of its members and celebrates the particular ministry of each person in the life of the church.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them.

There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served.

There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to each of us for our service.

The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good for all.
Christ is like a single body, which has many parts.

It is still one body even though it is made up of different parts.

If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness.

All of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.

These people have been called by God, in accordance with the faith and order of this church, to serve among us. They have accepted their call and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, it is an honor to be entrusted with responsibility for service in the ministry of the church, whether gathered or scattered.

Having prayerfully considered the duties and responsibilities of your ministry, are you prepared to serve with the help of God in Christ's name and for the glory of God?

(candidates for leadership) I am

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Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ?

(candidates for leadership) I do, relying on God's grace.

Members of the household of faith, you have heard the promises of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them. Will those who are able rise and witness to the commitment we now make?

***We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Christ Jesus. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.**

Let us pray.

***Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in this household of faith and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit to them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties that your church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united in Christ's ministry, to the glory of your name. Amen.**

In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the people of St. Paul's UCC, I rejoice to announce that you are installed in your respective positions. In accordance with the faith and order of this church, I extend to you the hand of Christian love.

Thanks be to God.

A TIME FOR COMMUNAL PRAYER

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

You are invited to share joys and concerns we can pray for together. Let our sharing itself be an act of prayer.

PRAYERS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Our Father, who 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

MISSION MOMENT

“Our Daily Bread”

Maryann Brenneman

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ENCOURAGEMENT TO SHARING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

You are invited to place your gifts in the offering basket as you arrive or depart from our worship together.

Faithful Friends of God, the prophets tell us that devotion is revealed in the way we lighten each other's load—right here, in our streets and neighborhoods, where strain is real and hope needs partners. When we give, we join the work of lifting burdens and repairing the places we call home. Let our offering be simple and true: open hands, willing hearts, and commitment to our shared life.

*DEDICATING OUR OFFERINGS (TOGETHER)

Calling Voice Who Leads Us Toward Freedom, we give thanks for every gift offered today—for open hands, willing hearts, and the courage to imagine a shared life made whole. Bless what we have brought. Let it move where relief is needed, where repair can begin, where dignity can rise. Make these gifts more than generosity—make them instruments of justice, seeds of compassion, signs that your vision is taking root among us. For every burden lifted, for every neighbor tended, for every act of mercy made possible, we give you thanks. Carry us forward in this work with gratitude deep enough to shape the world we are building together. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve

*SINGING TOGETHER

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” Black #593

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
ring with the harmonies of liberty;

Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the harsh past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.

Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
felt in the days when hope unborn had died:

Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,
come to the place for which our people sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered.

Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last,

Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last,
where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

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God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
God who hast brought us thus far on the way;
God, who by your might, led us into the light,
keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met you,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, forget you;
Shadowed beneath your hand, may we forever stand,
true to our God, true to our native land.

*GOOD WORDS FOR GOING FORTH

As you have been fed, go to feed the hungry.

As you have been set free, go to set free the imprisoned.

As you have been received – give.

As you have heard – proclaim.

And the blessing which you have received from the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit be always with you. Amen.

Written by Rev. Daniel B. Randall and posted on the United Church of Christ's Worship Ways website, <http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/01/benediction-as-you-have-received.html>.

*SINGING TOGETHER

“You Are Salt for the Earth, O People”

Black #181, v. 2

You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!

Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the City of God!

**Refrain: Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;
Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!**

DISMISSAL

Our worship concludes; our service continues.

Blessed be God, now and forever!

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