



*St. James United Church*  
**Announcements**  
**March 26, 2023**

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**Upcoming Events:**

- **Sun. Mar. 26<sup>th</sup> - 9:15 to 9:45am (before church) – Lenten Wisdoms** (upper room)
  - **Sun. Mar. 26<sup>th</sup> – 10am – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent; *Mental Health Awareness Sunday - The Journey Continues; Chili Lunch After Church***
  - **Sun. Apr. 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10am - Palm Sunday Communion** at SJUC
  - **Thurs. Apr. 6<sup>th</sup> – 7pm - Maundy Thursday** hosted at St. James United
  - **Fri. Apr. 7<sup>th</sup> – 11am - Good Friday - Innispirit Service with Choir at Churchill UC**
  - **Sun. Apr. 9<sup>th</sup> - about 6:25am** (keep your eyes on the news for the time of sunrise!) - **Easter Sunrise Service - Innispirit**
  - **Sun. Apr. 9<sup>th</sup> – 10am - Halleluiah! Easter Sunday Service** at SJUC
  - **Sun. Apr. 16<sup>th</sup> – 10am – Worship Service**
  - **Mon. Apr. 17<sup>th</sup> - 1pm – UCW Meeting** (upper room)
  - **Sun. Apr. 23<sup>rd</sup> – 10am – Worship Service**
  - **Sun. Apr. 30<sup>th</sup> – 10am – Worship Service**
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**Thank you to this Sunday's volunteers who make our time of gathering meaningful & fun.**

**Greeters:** Cairine Tessier

**Lay Reader(s):** Donna Wice

**Refreshments:** Organized by Pat Edmonds, Hilary Mallett, Linda Severson-Winson

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**THIS WEEK IN WORSHIP... from Pastor Patricia**

On this fifth Sunday of Lent, the light becomes dark as we extinguish our final Lenten candle. We continue to manifest our contemplations and meditations of the Easter season through our prayers and our songs.



**The lectionary this week is based on Ezekiel 37:1–14**

**Taken from: Called to Be the Church • 2019 • Loving Our Neighbours • Worship for Five Sundays 51 Program Week 5**

It is one week before Palm Sunday,  
and Jesus enters Jerusalem for the last time.

It is one week before Holy Week and Jesus' last days before he is handed over to the authorities and crucified. It is one week before the powers of empire and greed seem to win again. It is one week before the beginning of end; we stand with Ezekiel and stare into a valley filled with dead, dried human bones. What a sight! As far as you can see, nothing but bones. Leg bones. Ankle bones. Arm bones. Shoulder bones. And none are connected. The empty eye sockets of bleached human skulls stare into oblivion. Death reigns in this place. Endings. Sorrow. Grief. This is a valley of futility and hopelessness.

*It's a feeling that many people know all too well. Depression. Grief. Hopelessness. You ask yourself, "Why bother?"*

They don't know it yet, but there are some close followers of Jesus who will know this experience all too soon as they watch their messiah, their teacher and friend, their hope, hang on a cross and die.

*What might God do in this impossible situation? It's a really good question. It may be the only question that matters. What might God do in this impossible situation?*

When you ask the question "What might God do in this impossible situation?" you are activating your faith. You are opening yourself to God. You are reaching out and grabbing on to hope, even creating hope for yourself and those around you. Because as long as you can think of one answer, there is hope.

I invite you to read this scripture in your bible this week, or here as it is presented to you in this Readers Theatre format.

Ezekiel: I felt as if God's hand was upon me. By the spirit I was carried to the middle of valley—a dry valley, covered in...bones. God led me around that valley, around those bones. There were so many. Old. Brittle. Dry. And then I heard God's voice!

God's Voice: You. I ask you, can these bones live?

Ezekiel: God, Most High, you know.

God's Voice: Then be a prophet, Ezekiel. Speak to these bones. Say to them: (God's Voice whispers in Ezekiel's ear.)

Ezekiel: So I did as God commanded me. I said to the dry bones, "O dry bones, hear God's word! God says to you, 'I will breathe into you, and you will live.'" God says to

you, 'I will put muscle and flesh on you. I will cover you with skin. I will fill you with breath. You will live, and you will know that I Am God!'" And when I finished speaking, there was a terrifying sound. Bones rattling against stone. Bones rattling against other bones. Bones coming together, each finding its proper place. And, as I watched, muscles grew, and flesh grew, and skin covered the new bodies. But they were lifeless. There was no breath in them.

God's Voice: Speak to the breath, prophet. Say to the breath: (God's Voice whispers to Ezekiel.) Ezekiel: So I prophesied to the breath, I spoke the words given to me, like I had never spoken before, "God says to you, 'Breath: come from the four winds, breathe into these who were killed, so that they may live!'" The breath came into them. They lived. They stood on their feet. Thousands upon thousands of them! God's Voice: Man? Listen to me. These bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, we are cut off completely." So prophesy to them. Tell them that God, their God, is going to open their graves, and bring them back to life, and back to the land of Israel, O, my people! In that moment, you will know that I am God! I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live. I will take you home, and you will know that I have spoken. I have acted. Ezekiel: So I did exactly that. And so did God. One: This is the witness of God.

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## **From last week's Lenten Wisdoms on Sunday before church...**

~ Based on the book: good courage-daily reflections on hope, edited by Alydia Smith

### **The face of courage ~ Lent 4**

~ Based on the book: good courage-daily reflections on hope,  
edited by Alydia Smith

*Be strong and courageous; Do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you  
wherever you go. ~ Joshua 1: 9*

I've never considered myself a courageous person. I can hardly go to the kitchen in the middle of the night without turning on the light. I suppose I've never really had to be courageous. I've never known war, or hunger, or worry for my children's security. But even though I'm not a courageous person myself, I knew courage the moment I saw it...

It was reflected in her eyes when she stepped out of the car the first time we met. Her dark brown eyes, alert in spite of her exhaustion, taking in her surroundings, counting heads to make sure her family was close by. They were the eyes of Ruta, an Eritrean mother who had just arrived in northern Saskatchewan. Two days earlier she and her husband and children had left the refugee camp in Sudan where they had been living for more years than I want to think about.

Ruta stepped out of the car with seven kids, 4 suitcases, no English, unending courage, and a deeply rooted hope that things were going to be OK. In the days that followed her arrival I would stop by as often as I could. I brought toys for the kids - bubbles, sidewalk chalk, candy, anything I could think of to brighten their day. She would make me coffee, very strong coffee, and would laugh when it made me choke.

She would insist on feeding me and then laugh when her spicy chicken dishes made my eyes water. I couldn't speak any of the three languages she spoke. She couldn't speak my one. So there were many awakened silences when we simply sat watching our children play.

A few months later I arrived at her home. She answered the door with a huge smile, eyes dancing with the look of someone who had a surprise she couldn't wait to share. She threw open her arms and called, "Sister"! We both cried. We now have long chats. I love her coffee and can eat her chicken dripping in spicy sauce like a champ.

I am not a courageous person, I know that. But if anyone were to ask me about courage I would tell you about my friend, my sister, Ruta... I would tell you that even on her lowest days, when she missed her family, her friends, and what life used to be, when she was scared and uncertain of what was to come, she would turn her eyes to the heavens, give thanks to God, and laugh.

## **PONDER**

**Jesus needed courage to face 40 days in the desert.**

When have you been witness to courage?

How does hope empower us to be courageous when life doesn't go the way we have planned?

## **PRACTICE**

According to the UN Refugee Agency, more than 27 million refugees were forced to flee their countries for political, social, and environmental reasons in 2021.

Walk a labyrinth, or use a finger labyrinth, and turn your heart to God. As you walk, lift prayers for the millions of people who have been displaced around our world. Pray for them. Pray for courage to fill their hearts, and for courage to fill the hearts of those who could help them.

*Written by Nora Vedress*

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**Shining Waters Region UCW 2022 annual meeting will be held *Tuesday May 2nd 2023 from 9:15 am to 6 pm at Burton Avenue United Church, Barrie.***

**Pat Edmonds will have the pre-registration forms this Sunday for UCW members wishing to attend. The form must be submitted by April 10th and, if meals are required, the cost is lunch \$20.00 and dinner \$25.00. Cheque must be submitted with the form.**

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## Keeping in Touch

1. Phoned Jean McGinley to say hello and chat. Her and Robert are both well, although Robert had a pacemaker put in a couple of weeks ago and has recovered well. He was just in the hospital for an overnight stay after the surgery. They both are looking forward to the spring weather and getting outdoors. She said to say hello to all at church. ~ Author: Harry Visser
2. I had a lovely visit with Marion and Bruce Hudson last week. Marion is recuperating well from a stroke she had over a month ago. She is home, and getting around slowly with the help of her cane. Bruce has been *caregiver extraordinaire!* Both Marion and Bruce say *hello!* to everyone, and look forward to coming back to our services when Marion is stronger. ~ Author: Patricia

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**This joke was told in an episode of the popular television sitcom “The Odd Couple” in 1973.**

***“It is dangerous to assume because you might make an “ass” out of “u” and “me”.***



**Funny or not, it can be the truth, especially if you *assume* that the minister knows about something... but she doesn't!**

**If you hear that someone needs a visit,  
or if you yourself would like a friendly or supporting visit from  
Pastor Patricia,**

***PLEASE REACH OUT!***

***Call the office*** at 705-436-5225

***Send an email*** to [patricia.stjamesuc@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.stjamesuc@gmail.com)

or in an emergency, ***send a text message*** to

647-201-4201

(be sure to mention your name in the text)

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# What is happening at Churchill & Gilford United Churches...

## **LENTEN GROUPS & WEEKLY ACTIVITIES**

**Bible Study – Open to all, tea/coffee and fellowship, Thursdays 10:30 at Gilford**

**Prayer Yoga – all welcome, Wednesdays 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm, Churchill**

**Choir Practice for Good Friday – Sundays after Service 12:15 pm at Churchill**

**Quilting/Crafts – Meet Tuesdays at 10:00 am at the Manse**

**Faith and Fellowship Ladies –the last Monday/month, Churchill 7 pm**

**Bridge Group – Play Tuesdays at 1 pm Gilford**

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## **A Solidarity Meal and Movie Night**

*The solidarity meal will begin at 6:00 pm on March 31, at Midhurst United Church.*



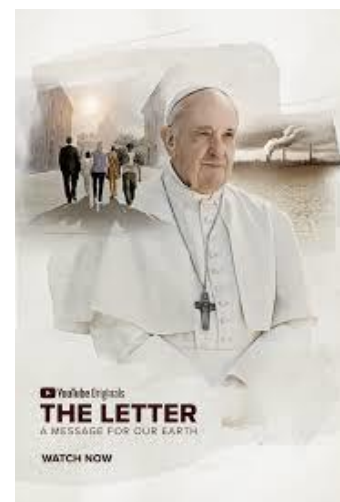
A solidarity meal is intentionally simple –it will be a choice of hearty soups (including vegan) and buns. Our solidarity is in recognition of caring for others and the common good.

About 6:30, we will begin to watch the movie, “The Letter” (2022). This documentary follows people representing youth, Indigenous, the poor and the natural world itself, travelling to meet with Pope Francis to discuss the impact of climate change on their lives. It is very engaging and beautifully filmed. The movie will be followed by group discussion.

The ‘Solidarity Meal and Movie Night’ is open to all - youth to elders! Come meet others in your community who share your concerns for climate change.

There is no charge for this event.

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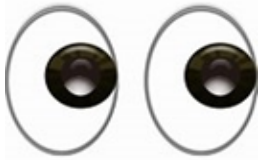
Things that can be put to good use...

## **Trinity United in Beeton collects stuff!**

Here is a list of items you might have at home that could be put to good use:

forward them to Patricia for delivery to Trinity United Church in Beeton.

- used eye glasses for refurbishing
- used stamps
- pop can tabs



## **what is happening at Bond Head United Church...**

**Be a part of their Faith Discussion Group...**

**They meet weekly on Tuesday morning at 10:00 am.**

**Come join them for interesting conversations, coffee and lots of laughter!!**



**United in Learning**  
*Distance learning for church leaders*

**Here is an opportunity for you to take a peek at some of the webinars that have been offered through United in Learning.**

**Some past ones include:**

- Indigenous Children Then, Now and Tomorrow - A Panel Discussion for Orange Shirt Day
- Daring to Share What Do You Need to Know about Anglican-United Church Shared Ministry?
  - Creating Space for Mental Health and Well Being
- Mental Health WISE Church: Communities of Faith as Places of Welcome, Inclusion, and Support
  - Lesser Evils - A 2022 online journey through Lent

**In Case You Missed It...**

If you want to see any of these or other webinars, you can find all the recordings on [United-In-Learning.com](http://United-In-Learning.com).

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*Please submit all announcements via e-mail to Heather Thompson by noon on Tuesdays.  
Thank you!*