

# Quispamsis United Church

February 25, 2024 – Community Connections

Guest Speaker: Evelyn McNulty

*Romero House*

*Liturgical Colour: Purple*

*Presider: Affirming Committee*

*Director of Music: Stephen Alexander*

*Reader: Ethan Alward*

**Centering Reflection:** *“If we can learn to see humanity in ourselves and in one another, we can mitigate so much of the self-inflicted pain we feel.”*

- Simran Jeet Singh

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## GATHERING TOGETHER

**Video:** Bruce Cockburn - Orders

**Welcome and Lighting of the Christ Candle**

**Lighting of Affirm Candle & Acknowledgment of Territories**

**Celebrations**

**Introit:**

Gather Us In

MV 7

**Gather Us in, ground us in you.**

**Gather us in, ground us in you.**

**Gather us in, gather us in.**

**Ground us, ground us in you.**

**Call to Worship (Responsive):**

Are you ready for this journey?

**We truly are. We have decided to follow Jesus.**

This is not going to be an easy journey. You may want to turn around and go home to safety and security.

**No. We're ready. The world is behind us; we are focused on the cross.**

Many will begin the journey; but not all will continue. Are you ready?

**We are ready. We place our faith and trust in Jesus.**

**Hymn:**        **Video (Sing-a-long)**        I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

**Prayer of Approach (Unison)**

Lord of presence and power, be with us as we continue of our Lenten journey to the Cross.  
Help us to make a commitment of our lives, our spirits, our hearts to ministry in your name.  
**AMEN.**

**Opening Hymn:**

We Have This Ministry

VU 510

**We have this ministry  
and we are not discouraged;  
it is by God's own power  
that we may live and serve.  
Openly we share God's word,  
speaking truth as we believe,  
praying that the shadowed world  
may healing light receive.**

**We have this ministry, O God, receive our living.**

**O Christ, the tree of life,  
our end and our beginning,  
we grow to fullest flower  
when rooted in your love.  
Brothers, sisters, clergy, lay,  
called to service by your grace,  
different cultures, different gifts,  
the young and old a place.**

**We have this ministry, O God, receive our giving.**

**The yoke of Christ is ours,  
the whole world is our parish;  
we daily take the cross,  
the burden and the joy.  
Bearing hurts of those we serve,  
wounded, bruised and bowed with pain,  
Holy Spirit, bread and wine,  
we die and rise again.**

**We have this ministry, O God, receive our loving.**

### **Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

**Guiding Lord, even though we hesitated on our Lenten journey; we vowed to come with you through all the trials and fears toward the Cross. Today we face the challenge which true commitment brings. Are we willing to offer our whole selves to you in service? We would like to think that we can do that, but we are aware of how many times we have turned away from service and instead focused on our own desires. Remind us again of the commitment you would have us give if we are to become disciples. Forgive our stubbornness and fears. Lead us forward, gracious Lord, up these steps toward the Cross. AMEN.**

### **Words of Assurance**

The journey of discipleship is never easy; but you can be assured that you will not be on this journey alone. Place your trust in Jesus. AMEN.

### **Time for All Ages**

<b>Sung Introduction to Scripture:</b>	Wonderful Words of Life	Songs of the Gospel
	<b>Speak them over again to me</b>	
	<b>Wonderful words of life</b>	
	<b>Let me more of their beauty see</b>	
	<b>Wonderful words of life</b>	
	<b>Words of life and beauty</b>	
	<b>Teach me faith and duty</b>	
	<b>Beautiful words, wonderful words</b>	
	<b>Wonderful words of life</b>	
	<b>Beautiful words, wonderful words</b>	
	<b>Wonderful words of life</b>	

### **Readings:**

#### **Deuteronomy 15:11**

For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'

#### **Isaiah 58:10**

'If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry, and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. '

#### **Proverbs 22:9**

"The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor."

## **Matthew 35/36**

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Gift of Music**            In Christ Alone

**Message**                      Guest Speaker : Evelyn McNulty – Romero House

### **RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD (Unison)**

You stop us in our tracks, O Lord, with your reminder that discipleship is not a “sometime” thing. We are called to place our whole lives in your care; to follow you; to serve you by caring for others, not just once in a while, but always. We admit that we’re not always ready to do this. The demand is great; the need is great; our energies are limited. Help us to place our trust and our lives in your care. You will give us the strength and courage that we will need for this step on the journey. Be with us. Help us to remember that your love is poured out for all your people; you are never far away. It is in Jesus’ Name, we pray. AMEN.

**Hymn:**

O Christian Love

VU 594

**O Christian, love your sister and your brother!  
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;  
to worship rightly is to love each other,  
each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.**

**Follow with reverent steps the great example:  
Jesus whose holy work was doing good;  
so shall the wide earth seem a hallowed temple,  
each loving life a psalm of gratitude.**

**Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangour  
of wild war-music o'er the earth shall cease;  
love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,  
and in its ashes plant the tree of peace.**

**May we but wait upon Love's word,  
Knowing our prayer is heard.**

**Prayers of the People and Sung Lord's Prayer**

Holy One,  
Your steadfast love surrounds us.  
As a shepherd protects his sheep,  
    you watch over us,  
    care for us, and  
    gently lead us through temptation to life-giving paths.

We praise you and give thanks for all the ways we have felt your love and protection this week.  
For our minister, our congregation, and our community.

Deliver us, God,  
when we are tempted to

- justify the oppression of others
- offer our neighbours stones instead of bread, defeatism instead of hope, or
- avert our attention away from people, places, and situations that make us uncomfortable.

Challenge us, God,  
challenge the temptation of complacency and turn us to you,  
    your paths, and your understandings.

We seek your wisdom, so that we can decide how to faithfully respond to

- hunger and homelessness and hardship right here in Quispamsis and greater Saint John.
- to our elected officials at all levels , decision makers and influencers
- to all Canadians, old and new facing economic uncertainty, unemployment, and health concerns
- to the work of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous and First Nations communities
- and to the conflicts in Israel/Palestine, Ukraine, and other countries also ravaged by war and hostile conditions

Wherever there is suffering in this world,  
    wherever a person's basic human rights are not being met,  
    wherever there is systemic oppression and discrimination,  
we ask that you be particularly present, God,  
and that you mobilize us to work toward justice-based solutions.

God, today and every day, we ask your blessing and support for those we name and those we remember in silence, that they may feel and know your steadfast presence, boundless love and compassion.

Silent Prayer.....

We lift up to you now..... (prayer list names spoken)

As we continue our Lenten journey, strengthen us to do your work in the world remembering the words Jesus taught us singing

### **Sung Lord's Prayer**

VU 959

**Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name,  
    your kingdom come,  
    your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
    Give us today our daily bread.  
    Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
        who sin against us.  
    Save us from the time of trial  
    and deliver us from evil for the kingdom,  
    the power and the glory are yours,  
    Now and forever.**

### **Life and Work of the Church**

#### **Sharing of Gifts and Talents**

As God gives to us, we give to others in many ways: not just with money, but in time and the sharing of our talents. Offering plates can be found in the narthex and here at the front of the sanctuary. Please join together now in singing our offertory dedication hymn.....

#### **Offertory Dedication Hymn:**

We Give You But Your Own  
**We give you but your own,  
    What e'er the gift may be,  
All that we have is yours alone,  
    We give it gratefully.**

VU 542

**Closing Hymn:**

VU 584

Through the Heart of Every City  
Through the heart of every city  
runs the flow of human need.  
'Mid this glass and steel are pulsing  
smoldering wick and bruised reed.  
Has our church a word to offer,  
some hope shining from our creed?  
Walking through the concrete furrows  
Jesus sows the Word as seed.

Through the passing generations,  
in their spirit, flesh and bone,  
Jesus Christ becomes incarnate:  
holy hearts are living stone  
building here a house of refuge  
as a temple, as a home.  
So within the city's shadow  
Jesus' planted Word has grown.

Through our worship and our witness,  
Jesus, grant that we may still  
hear the heartbeat of compassion  
calling us to do your will.  
You, our vine, and we, your branches,  
deaden not by any chill,  
working for that final city  
where the harvest is fulfilled.

**Prayer of Commissioning (Responsive)**

Lent is the season in which we ought to be surprised by joy. Our self-sacrifices serve no purpose unless, by laying aside this or that desire, we are able to focus on our heart's deepest longing: unity with Christ.

**In him-- in his suffering and death, his resurrection and triumph, we find our truest joy."**

**Benediction**

The step of discipleship requires commitment and faith. Go now in peace, bringing the good news of Jesus' love to all people. Do not be afraid. God is with you. AMEN.

**Choral Closing**

We Shall Go Out With Hope

VU 586 vs. 1

**We shall go out with hope of resurrection;  
we shall go out, from strength to strength go on;  
we shall go out and tell our stories boldly;  
tales of a love that will not let us go.  
We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted;  
we'll dream our dreams of hurts that can be healed;  
we'll weave a cloth of all the world united  
within the vision of new life in Christ.**

**Closing Music**