

# Quispamsis United Church

January 28, 2024 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany

*Community Connections Sunday*

*Guest: KV Food Basket - Brian Rignanesi*

***Liturgical Colour: Green***

***Presider: Affirming Committee***

***Music: Stephen Alexander***

***Reader: Wendy Stewart***

***Centering Reflection:*** *“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.*

*-Matthew 25: V35*

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## GATHERING TOGETHER

**Opening Music & Time of Prayer and Candle Lighting**

**Welcome and Lighting of the Christ Candle**

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

**Celebrations**

**Introit:**

**The light of Christ has come into the world,  
The light of Christ has come into the world. (2x)**

**Call to Worship**

Come, let us praise God together!

**For God is great, and worthy of our praise!**

Let's tell stories of the things God has done— mighty acts of power and love throughout history:

**For God is great, and worthy of our praise!**

Let's remember how much God loves us, and celebrate the care that continues to show to all of creation:

**For God is great, and worthy of our praise! Let's worship God together! Amen**

**Prayer of Approach (Unison)**

**Holy One, we gather today in your presence. We are grateful for the shelter that you offer us through your love and comfort. We rejoice in the opportunity to seek your face, be fed by your Word, and to learn how to walk in the way of Christ.**

**As we focus today on food security in our community, we welcome you to speak to us in a deeper way. Amen**

**Opening Hymn:**

**Let Us with Gladsome Mind  
There's a spirit in the air,  
telling Christians everywhere:  
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working in our world.'**

**VU 582 (Vs 1,3,5,7)**

**When believers break the bread,  
when a hungry child is fed,  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working in our world.**

**When a stranger's not alone,  
where the homeless find a home,  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world**

**There's a Spirit in the air,  
calling people everywhere:  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.**

**Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

**God, we are aware that we have not loved you with our whole heart, nor have we loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have often ignored the cries of the hungry, the poor, and the oppressed and we have failed to share your bread with those who have less than us . Forgive us, O God, and renew us by your Spirit. Teach us to be generous and compassionate, to seek justice and peace, and to follow the example of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*(Silent Contemplation)*

## **Words of Assurance**

Our God is close to all who call. God receives us as we are, lifts us up, and calls us again to be people of love and mercy— salt and light in a hungry, hurting world. Receive God’s pardon and peace; you are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

## **Time for All Ages**

**Sung Introduction to Scripture:** Open Your Ears, O Faithful People

VU 272 (Vs 1)

**Open your ears O faithful people,  
Open your ears and hear God’s word.  
Open your hearts O faithful people,  
God now speaks to you.**

## **Readings**

### **Ephesians 3:14-21**

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **John 6:1-15 –Feeding of the Five Thousand**

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?’ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, ‘Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.’ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’ Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.’ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they

filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Choir Anthem:**

Blest Are They

VU 896

**Blest are they, the poor in spirit,  
theirs is the kingdom of God.  
Blest are they, full of sorrow,  
they shall be consoled.**

*Refrain*

*Rejoice and be glad!  
Blessed are you, holy are you!  
Rejoice and be glad!  
Yours is the kingdom of God.*

**Blest are they, the lowly ones,  
they shall inherit the earth.  
Blest are they who hunger and thirst,  
they shall have their fill. R**

**Blest are they who show mercy,  
mercy shall be theirs. Blest are they,  
the pure of heart,  
they shall see God. R**

**Blest are they who seek peace;  
they are the children of God.  
Blest are they who suffer in faith,  
the glory of God is theirs. R**

**Blest are you who suffer hate,  
all because of me.  
Rejoice and be glad yours is the kingdom;  
shine for all to see. R**

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

Hymn

Jesu, Jesu fill us with your love

VU 593

***Refrain***

***Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,  
show us how to serve  
the neighbours we have from you.***

**Kneels at the feet of his friends,  
silently washes their feet,  
master who acts as a slave to them. R**

**Neighbours are rich and poor,  
varied in colour and race,  
neighbours are near and far away. R**

**These are the ones we should serve,  
these are the ones we should love,  
all are neighbours to us and you. R**

**Kneel at the feet of our friends,  
silently washing their feet,  
this is the way we should live with you. R**

**Life and Work of the Church**

**Sharing of Gifts and Talents Offertory**

*If you want to give to KV food basket specifically you will find marked envelopes by the baskets.*

**Dedication Hymn:**

Lord, You Give the Great Commission

VU 512 (Vs 3)

**With gratitude and humble trust, we bring our best to you,  
Not just to serve your cause but share your love with neighbours too.  
O God who gave yourself to us in Jesus Christ your son,  
help us to give ourselves each day until life's work is done.**

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison)**

**God of goodness, we offer our gifts to you, those we have brought today and those we have within us. Jesus blessed the five loaves and the two small fish, and it was multiplied, and everyone had enough and more. God, please accept our prayers. We know you will multiply**

**this small offering beyond our imaginings, and we pray in hope that one day soon, everyone will eat and be satisfied. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. Amen**

*Adapted from Prayer of Intercession from Bread for the World website. [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)*

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

Loving God

Thank you for the gift of food, which sustains our lives and nourishes our bodies. We pray for those who are hungry, who do not have enough to eat, who face the threat of famine and malnutrition. We ask you to provide for their needs, to inspire compassion and generosity in those who have more than enough, and to guide the leaders and policymakers who can make a difference. This morning we ask your blessing on KV food basket. Bless and strengthen the volunteers and their families. We pray for all food banks across this province and nation. We also pray for the protection of the environment, the source of our food. We ask you to help us care for the earth, to preserve its resources, to prevent its degradation, and to restore its balance. We pray for the farmers, the fishers, the workers, and the consumers who depend on the food system. We ask you to bless their efforts, to ensure fair and ethical practices, and to promote cooperation and solidarity.

We pray for food security for all, that everyone may have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences. We pray for food security for ourselves, that we may be grateful, responsible, and generous with the food we have. We pray for food security for the future, that we may work together to build a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system.

We thank you that you hear us loving God. We are loved by you, blessed by your generosity and grace and so we ask you to teach us to share this with others. As your community of faith, we offer these prayers and prayers we hold close to our hearts to you now in silence.

*(Silence)*

We are grateful that we can pray the prayer you taught us to pray in unison  
**Lord's Prayer.....**

### **SENDING FORTH**

**Closing Hymn:**

**We are pilgrims  
We are pilgrims on a journey,  
fellow travellers on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.**

**VU 595**

**Sister, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.**

**I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.**

**I will weep when you are weeping,  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow,  
till we've seen this journey through.**

**When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.**

**Brother, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.**

### **Commissioning (Unison)**

**Loving God, take our hands take our lives, ordinary as wheat or cornmeal, daily as bread –  
our stumbling generosity, our simple actions, and find them good enough to help prepare  
the feast for all your people. Amen**

*-From the Monthly Prayers page of the Christian Aid website [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)*

### **Benediction**

Good people you have been offered the goodness of God;  
the nourishment of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life,  
through the yeast of the Holy Spirit,  
go now in peace to serve God in all that you think, do and say.  
God's peace will always be with you. AMEN.

**Choral Closing**

Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song

VU 641 (Vs 1)

**Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.  
I'll tell everybody about you wherever I go.  
For our life and our peace and our love is yourself.  
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.**

**Closing Music**