

February 22, 2025 – First Sunday of Lent
Guest Minister: Rev. Alana Martin

Light the Christ Candle

Welcome & Announcements

Introduce Guest Minister: Rev. Alana Martin

Call to Worship Beloved of God, we are called here today. We are called at every age, from every corner, to gather. Children of God, let us playfully worship together, worshipping God who made each of us and loves all of us. Amen.

Ministry of Music Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Gathering Prayer

All: God of All the Ages, we thank you for this day, for caring for us beautifully in this time. We praise your name for the gift of children in our lives and in our community. Forgive us for times when we discount their voices. Help us share your story with one another that we may remember your love written on our hearts. Remind us to follow children, as they lead us to living the kin-dom way. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Gathering Hymn I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry, VU # 644

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| I was there to hear your borne cry, I'll be there when you are old. | When you heard the wonder of the Word I was there to cheer you on; You were raised to praise the living Lord, to whom you now belong. If you find someone to share your time and you join your hearts as one, I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk 'til rising sun. | In the middle ages of your life, not too old, no longer young, I'll be there to guide you through the night, complete what I've begun. When the evening gently closes in, and you shut your weary eyes, I'll be there as I have always been with just one more surprise. | I was there to hear your borne cry, I'll be there when you are old. I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold. |
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Minute for Mission Becoming a parent or guardian is a life-changing, complex experience that doesn't have a one-size-fits-all answer. As kids, we looked to adults for guidance as we navigated the world with fresh eyes. Now, as adults, we recognize that we're still figuring things out as we go, and there's always an opportunity to grow our skills and minds.

In London, Ontario, Mission and Service partners with the London Community Chaplaincy as they respond to parents and guardians who want to build a network of support, share the parenting journey, and develop new skills as they navigate raising children in a low-income setting. Together, these parents are working hard to build a positive future for their children and families.

Each week, London Community Chaplaincy provides a welcoming and safe social setting for adults to connect and grow as parents. Not only do they learn how to guide a child through critical stages of development, but also how to navigate being a parent or guardian while managing financial stress, food insecurity, housing complications, and more. Gathering with other adults in a similar situation allows participants to share their struggles and triumphs, further building a sense of community.

Your gifts to Mission and Service support partnerships like the London Community Chaplaincy as they help empower parents along the parenting journey. Thank you.

Offering Invitation & Offertory Prayer

Hymn Spirit, Open My Heart, MVU # 79

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| Refrain Spirit, open my heart To the joy and pain of living. As you love, may I love, In receiving and in giving, | Spirit, open my heart. | God, replace my stony heart With a heart that's kind and tender. All my coldness and fear | To your grace I now surrender. Refrain |
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| Write your love upon my heart | May I weep with those who weep, |
| As my law, my goal, my story. | Share Your grace with my sisters and brothers. |
| In each thought, word, and deed, | In welcoming Christ |
| May my living bring you glory. | May we welcome one another. |
| Refrain | Refrain |

Children's Ministry *When God Made You*, a story by Matthew Paul Turner

Lord's Prayer *spoken*

Children Leave for Sunday School

Scripture

Psalm 100 All Lands Summoned to Praise God

A Psalm of thanksgiving. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the LORD is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Matthew 18:1-5 The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Message *Children Always Welcome*

In her message, Rev. Alana Martin helped us explore who we welcome children into our midst and worship.

Hymn *Jesus, Friend of Little Children*, VU #340

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| Jesus, friend of little children, let me be one too; take my hand, and ever keep me close to you. | Teach me how to grow in goodness, daily as I grow. You have been a child, and surely you must know. | Never leave me, nor forsake me; ever be my friend; for I need you, from life's dawning to its end. |
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Prayers of and for the People

Parting Hymn *Peace for the Children*, MVU # 149

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| Peace for the children, Peace, peace. | Peace for our families, Peace, peace. | Peace for the nations, Peace, peace. | Peace for our planet, Peace, peace. |
| Peace for the children, we pray. | Peace for our families, we pray. | Peace for the nations, we pray. | Peace for our planet, we pray. |
| Following the path of One of peace, We work for healing, We work for peace; Peace for the children today. | Following the path of One of peace, We work for healing, We work for peace; Peace for our families today. | Following the path of One of peace, We work for healing, We work for peace; Peace for the nations today. | Following the path of One of peace, We work for healing, We work for peace; Peace for our planet today. |

Commissioning & Benediction May God, who loves us from our borning cry, go with us. May Jesus, who welcomes us into relationship, stay with us. And may the Spirit's persistent call for peace be with us. This day. This week. And always. Amen.

Choral Amen

Extinguish the Christ Candle