

Glebe-St. James United Church

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2026

Gathered by God

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Welcome

Marsha Hay Snyder

My name is Marsha and I am a member of the church council.

We're so glad you're here today. Whether you're a first-time guest or a longtime member, whether you are joining us in person or online, we hope you feel at home. This is a place of faith, love, and community. Glebe-St. James is an Affirming Community of Faith in the United Church of Canada. We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities feel loved and supported. Thank you for being here.

Announcements

Marsha Hay Snyder

Lunch and Learn: Solidarity with Palestine Today following coffee hour, beginning at 12:15 p.m.

Great Glebe Garage Sale Dudleigh Coyle is looking for another 4 to 5 volunteers to help out at the Great Glebe. Not only do we need a few more for the GSJames table, we also require some for the GSJames Bathrooms!

And now Ron Totten would like to address the congregation and bring us up to date on Alex!

Land Acknowledgement

Wendy Bergeron

We acknowledge with respect and gratitude that this place of worship sits on unceded, unsurrendered Algonquin Anishinaabe territory. We honour their history and strive to learn from their legacy of deep connection to the land, the water, and all the creatures that share Turtle Island with us.

Over the past decade, our amazing Canadian Astronaut, Jeremy Hansen, has made a conscious effort to connect with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, participating in ceremonies and learning about the profound, ancient relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land.

He often described his mission as launching from Turtle Island—a term he embraces—to orbit Grandmother Moon.

His personal Artemis II mission patch was designed by Anishinaabe artist Henry Guimond. The patch is a heptagon representing the Seven Grandfather Teachings of the Anishinaabe People. It features seven animals—buffalo, eagle, bear, sasquatch, beaver, wolf, and turtle—representing respect, love, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, and truth.

His Mantra was to live by these teachings while orbiting “Grandmother Moon”.

Candle Lighting We Light This Candle

TLUS 55

**We light this candle for hope.
Await the new life within.
May our hearts now live each day,
so hope can find a way, so hope can find a way.**

Call to Worship

In the darkest valley,
at the banquet table;
in the hard work of life,
at the moments of ease;
in our day-to-day reality,
at times set aside—
like this time, now—
for worship, for listening, for paying attention;
with every step we take:
goodness and mercy follow us;
our cups overflow.

Opening Prayer

Loving Shepherd,
you know our names;
you care for us.
When we face darkness and death,
walk beside us.
When we hunger for your love,
fill us with your presence.
When we are fearful,
feed us at your table.
May we dwell in the house of goodness and mercy
all the days of our lives. Amen.

Hymn **Are You a Shepherd?**

MV 126

1. Are you a shepherd, good shepherd who leads us
safely through danger, while calming our fears?
Are you a father who shelters and feeds us,
shares in our laughter and wipes away tears?

Refrain:

- Yes, you are shepherd, parent and teacher,
but you are greater than all that we know.
Holy and living, loving and giving,
God, you are with us wherever we go.
2. Are you a mother, good mother who bears us,
comforts, protects us and helps us to rest?
Are you a teacher who daily prepares us,
challenging students to offer their best?
 3. Great, gentle shepherd, forever beside us,
lead all your children in paths that are right.
Great, loving parent, wise teacher, you guide us.
We want to love you and bring you delight.

Call to Healing

Friends, even though we strive to be fully alive,
there are times when we fall short of the mark,
times when we wander from our path of
right relations and justice-making.
Please join me in praying...

Prayer for Healing

**Gentle Shepherd, you guide us in right paths,
you lead us in the ways of righteousness,
but we have allowed our anger, our rage, our greed,
and, at times even hate, to direct our paths.
We have overreacted, we have taken more than our share,
we have despised others that seem to have it all.
Forgive us, God, for not following your ways.
Forgive us for not remembering that we are your sheep,
and you are our Shepherd.
Forgive us when we have not listened for your voice
and instead have acted in the ways of the world.
Guide us back to your path, to loving you and loving our neighbours.
Help us to unclench our fists and lend out our hands
in hope and healing, forgiveness and love.
In the name of Christ our Shepherd we pray. Amen.**

Assurance of God's Love

The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
The Good Shepherd knows the sheep,
and the Good Shepherd lays down his life
for the sheep so that the sheep may live.
We are part of the flock, we are part of Christ's body.
In Christ we find wholeness and restoration.
Go forth and share this Good News. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Family of faith, God's grace is good news.
God's grace is worth celebrating!
So in the spirit of joy and abundant gratitude,
we are going to celebrate this mercy by
passing the peace with our neighbours.

Friends, the peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you.

Hymn Send Your Peace to Our World

TLUS 135

Ya Rab as-salami,
amter a-lay-na aa-sa-lam.
Ya Rab as-salami,
im-la' qu-lu-ba-na as-sa-lam.

Listening for Wisdom

Theme Conversation Abundant Life – John 10:10

- *Clear cup, Pitcher of water, tray or bowl underneath (for spills)*

“Good morning, friends!
Look what I have—water!”
(Hold up the cup.)
“Is this cup empty or full?”

“I’m going to fill it up...”
(Slowly pour water until it reaches the top.)
“Now it’s full!”
(Pause, then keep pouring so it gently overflows into the bowl.)
“Oh! It’s overflowing!”

“In the Bible, Jesus says:
‘I came so you can have life—FULL life!’”
“Not just a little... but so full it **overflows!**”

“Let’s pretend we’re overflowing!”

- “Show me your biggest smile!”
- “Stretch your arms wide!”
- “Say: ‘So much joy!’”

(Let them shout it together.)

“Jesus fills us with:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace

So much that it spills out to others!”

“When I say ‘Overflow,’ you say ‘Thank you, God!’”

Leader: “Overflow!”

Kids: “Thank you, God!”

(Repeat once or twice.)

Prayer

“Dear Jesus,

Thank you for filling us with love,

Help our lives overflow,

Amen.”ffb

“Remember—God doesn’t just fill your cup...He makes it **overflow!**”

Hymn Little By Little *(Verses 1 and 5)*

TLUS 134

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little.

Little by little by little I know,

The tiniest seed will grow.

Habits of peace and justice.

Habits of peace and justice,

Habits of peace and justice:

Tools to change our world.

**Little by little by little.
Little by little by little.
Little by little by little I know,
The tiniest seed will grow.**

Prayer for Wisdom

Creator God,
You speak to us in a thousand different ways—
in the wind that rustles through the trees,
in early morning's birdsong,
and in the first blooms of spring.
Everywhere we look,
creation whispers of your creativity.
So as we turn our hearts toward scripture,
clear the distractions from our minds.
Silence in us any voice but your own,
so that like the birds, and the flowers,
and the mighty rushing wind,
we might sing of your goodness.
We are leaning in.
We are in awe.
We are listening. Amen.

Gospel John 10:1-10

Shelley Eckford

‘Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go

out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

This is wisdom from the gospel of John.

Gift of Music "The 23rd Psalm"

Bobby McFerrin

*The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all I need
She makes me lie down in green meadows
Beside the still waters, She will lead.*

*She restores my soul, She rights my wrongs
She leads me in a path of good things
And fills my heart with songs*

*Even though I walk, through a dark and dreary land
There is nothing that can shake me
She has said She won't forsake me
I'm in her hand.*

*She sets a table before me, in the presence of my foes
She anoints my head with oil
And my cup overflows.*

*Surely, surely goodness and kindness will follow me
All the days of my life
And I will live in her house
Forever, forever and ever.*

*Glory be to our Mother, and Daughter
And to the Holy of Holies
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be
World, without end. Amen.*

Reflection Voices from Gaza: Witnessing genocide, Surviving and Hope

Prof. Iyas Salim Abu-hajjar

Thank you very much for your gracious invitation. I am honored to be here with you. I am here today to share with you some of the voices from Gaza — voices of friends, family members, and loved ones speaking from within a genocide that has turned Gaza, one of the oldest cities in the world, into a pile of rubble. This ancient city and civilization on the eastern Mediterranean has long been a vital connection on the route between Egypt and Syria for thousands of years. It is heart-wrenching and painful, to say the least, to witness the death and destruction relentlessly inflicted upon a beloved place where I was born and raised. How painful it is to see the neighborhoods you know, the familiar streets, hospitals, universities, schools, museums, ancient and historical monuments, mosques, churches, buildings, and favorite landmarks reduced to rubble and memory. And it is truly agonizing to watch on TV, in photos, and in videos as the faces of friends and relatives disappear into body parts covered in blood and the gray dust of collapsed buildings. How hard it is to see innocent beautiful children rushed into ambulances, or into the backs of battered cars, on their way to hospitals, or to what remains of hospitals.

In the first months of this full-scale genocide, I, like many others, tried to keep in touch with loved ones in Gaza, asking about them, worrying whether they were still alive, and trying to support them as much as possible, even if only through words. A few months into the war, I was speaking with a dear old friend of mine, and I expressed my sadness and heartbreak over what was happening to him, to our friends, to family, to everyone, and to our beloved Gaza. He replied with advice: “We know how you feel, how sad you feel. I understand. But while we are here, surviving on our land and doing our best to endure, we want you to take our voice to the world. Tell the world what is happening to us here in Gaza.” “That is your duty,” he said. I promised I would do just that: to do the best I can to convey the voices from Gaza to the world.

I would like to begin with what a friend described to me an area he fled to months after the start of the genocide. That area is Al-Mawasi, along the seacoast west of Khan Younis. Al-Mawasi was once known by locals as heaven on earth, for its abundance of orange groves, guava, mango, and palm trees, as well as vegetables, all set against the backdrop of the blue Mediterranean. He described the changes

he saw there during the genocide in the following words: “You can’t even set foot in Al-Mawasi now. Everyone sets up a tent wherever there’s space, no matter how tight or small. The beach is full of tents and people.” The area used to hold more than a million people squeezed into it. He described the neighborhoods of the city as “a cocktail of roads, farms, houses, tents, asphalt, rubble, and trees — all mixed up, bulldozed.” He added: “Everyone is sick. Water is polluted, and people are weak and thin. We’re dehydrated due to a lack of clean drinking water, and we’re suffering from an epidemic of hepatitis. It’s highly infectious, and many are suffering. We sleep with insects, and nearby cactus trees have all kinds of rodents and insects.”

I lost many dear ones forever. They have become memories now — some old, some far too young for life to have ended so violently and abruptly. In mid-March 2024, my brother-in-law, 17-year-old Amro, was hit by shrapnel from a tank shell and killed instantly in front of his parents and two younger brothers. The shrapnel pierced his fragile body from the stomach and exited through his back. Amro died immediately. A year earlier, he had been excited to receive his first passport and wanted to “see the world,” as he once said. My dear friend and former high school classmate, Professor Ibrahim Al-Astal, with whom I shared the same desk in class, was killed when Israel bombed his house along with his wife Afnan, their daughters, and grandchildren. Ibrahim was the Dean of the College of Education at one of Gaza’s largest universities. He was one of the kindest and most generous individuals one could ever meet.

The genocidal campaign on Gaza has brought unimaginable suffering, killing, maiming, and destruction with no end in sight. “Is there a world outside? Does the world watch what is happening to us?” one of my friends from Gaza asked me when he was lucky enough to have an internet connection. On May 13, 2025, my former classmate from Khan Younis described the bombing of the night before in his own words: “Yesterday we truly lived through the horrors of the Day of Judgment; we experienced something like volcanoes and earthquakes. The ground split open and swallowed people. By God, it is enough. People are exhausted. Death is chasing us at all times, and we breathe its stench with every breath we take.”

As I read my friend’s message after waking up in the morning, I turned on Al Jazeera TV. What was being broadcast were terrifying scenes of victims’ bodies scattered

in the streets as a result of Israeli airstrikes on eastern Khan Younis, with ambulance crews prevented from reaching them and retrieving them. My friend message continued: “Our neighborhoods are being carpet-bombed using a new type of bombs.” Another friend sent me a message saying, “This is an age of utter chaos and bloodshed... of relentless, crushing war.” On that day, so far, the media reported the killing of more than 40 people in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza.

A few days later, after yet another massacre in Gaza, my friend wrote: “The scene was horrific. I have nothing to say after what I saw with my own eyes. Let me assure you, our condition would sadden everyone. We possess neither stone nor sorry.” He ended his message with these words: “Death is free, and it is the cheapest and most comforting thing there.”

During the summer of 2025, a friend sent out this message, titled: “To those outside Gaza: Read. Understand. Share.”

“ Because so many people outside Gaza still don’t believe what is happening there — or think it is confined to just one area — we have seen this again and again on social media. But is that the truth?

Israel has destroyed Gaza from north to south. Gaza today is not a city. Gaza today is the remnants of life. Gaza no longer has “life” in the ordinary sense; it has “attempts at survival.”

Homes have become rubble. Streets have become cemeteries.

Electricity, water, and internet are now lost luxuries and fading memories.

Hospitals? Paralyzed.

Schools? Either destroyed or turned into temporary shelters.

Electricity? Cut off since the early days of the war. A very small minority has solar panels.

A loaf of bread? Nearly nonexistent, and flour is about to run out.

So how are people surviving?

Some have absolutely nothing. Some cook over wood fires. Some eat only one meal a day, or less. Some plant parsley, lettuce, anything, just to stay alive. Some make “soup” from water and onions. And some do not eat at all.

No food. No gas. Not enough flour. Prices are astronomical, and people have nothing.

Water? Polluted, salty, undrinkable. People filter it using primitive methods, boil it, or drink it as is because there is no alternative.

The occupation army drops leaflets from planes: “Leave your area immediately, it has become a danger zone.” Imagine a flyer falling from the sky, ordering you to leave your home right now.

So you gather what little you can and leave. You leave your house, your memories, your children’s scent, and walk toward a tent — a small tent. It does not protect you from bombing, cold, heat, or fear.

You do not know if you will return, or when, or whether your house will even still exist.

People in Gaza are either displaced, broken, starving, or crushed.

There is no longer any difference between rich or poor, doctor or vendor.

Everyone is hurting. Everyone is in need.

There is no such thing as “living” anymore.

Only “enduring.”

And even endurance is beginning to crack.

Help us amplify our voice. Help us break this wall of silence.

Gaza is not a number. Gaza is souls, children, mothers, and dreams bleeding. This pain must be heard beyond Gaza. The world must listen.”

The proud people of Gaza know and feel history. Because everywhere you look, the walls, buildings, and monuments speak of Palestinian history in that ancient land of Palestine. Israel has sought to erase that history by leveling Gaza, destroying the infrastructure of life, setting it on fire, flattening it to the ground, and leaving it in ruins. Yet Palestinians are rooted in their land, just as the roots of ancient olive trees run deep in the soil, organically and historically, for thousands of years.

I would like to end with the words of those educators, doctors, journalists, and poets who spoke their final words before they were killed, before they became martyrs.

“In heaven, there is a new Gaza, one without siege, now taking shape...” — Hiba Abu Nada

“We die standing, and we will not kneel.” — Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh, much-beloved doctor who was killed in prison under torture.

“I am very strong... but not so strong that I can cross the whole night alone.” — Haneen Qashtan

“I am not ordinary; I have a home, friends, memory, and a great deal of pain.” — Bilal Aql

“One day, I will be the most important football star in the world.” — Omar Hassan Jallasa

“What frightens me most is that my death in an Israeli strike would be mentioned as a number.” — Yafa Abu Baraka

“Today, my dream — if I am killed — is to be killed as one body, so that people can recognize me, and I do not become scattered body parts.” — Ayat Hudura

“I feel like I want to stay in Gaza more than ever, because I’ve come to hate the whole world.” — Dr. Maysara Al-Rais

“Whoever remains until the end will tell the story... we did what we could.” — Dr. Mahmoud Abu Nuhaila, the younger brother of one of my best friends in Gaza.

The beloved journalist Ismail Al-Ghoul was assassinated by Israeli drones. He uttered these last words: “We talked about everything... and now we are dying.”

Mahmoud Al-Nakhlah: “We will return — who knows when — but the important thing is that we will return.”

“We will leave Gaza for the sky — and only to the sky.” — Roshdi Al-Sarraj

“If I must die, let it bring hope, let it be a tale.” Refaat Alareer, a university professor and poet.

“Remember me with a prayer in my absence; perhaps one of you is closer to God in rank and has a prayer that is never rejected...” — Samira Mehdi

Thank you very much for listening.

Responding in Thanksgiving

Hymn When a Poor One

VU 702

- 1 When a poor one who has nothing shares with strangers,
when the thirsty water give unto us all,
when the wounded in their weakness strengthen others,
then we know that God still goes that road with us,
then we know that God still goes that road with us.**

- 2 When at last all those who suffer find their comfort,
when they hope though even hope seems hopelessness,
when we love though hate at times seems all around us,
then we know that God still goes that road with us,**

then we know that God still goes that road with us.

- 3 When our joy fills up our cup to overflowing,
when our lips can speak no words other than true,
when we know that love for simple things is better,
then we know that God still goes that road with us,
then we know that God still goes that road with us.**
- 4 When our homes are filled with goodness in abundance,
when we learn how to make peace instead of war,
when each stranger that we meet is called a neighbour,
then we know that God still goes that road with us,
then we know that God still goes that road with us.**

Invitation to Give

Friends, we are east of Eden, which means we have work to do. So may we roll up our sleeves and live out our faith. May we live generously and give what we can. The ushers may now come forward to collect tithes and offerings. Thank you for being a community that gives together. Let us be generous now.

Offering Hymn What Can I do?

MV 191

**What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy, I'll say a prayer
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.**

Offering Prayer

With our time, with our talents, with our treasures and with our trust,
we respond to the cries of others with which we share our planet.
Bless our actions in this offering, and may they bare fruit beyond our imagining,
For the sake of your Creation. Amen.

**Ya Rab as-salami,
amter a-lay-na aa-sa-lam.
Ya Rab as-salami,
im-la' qu-lu-ba-na as-sa-lam.**

Prayer of Jesus

**Our Mother and 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 trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Sent by the Spirit

Hymn For the Healing of the Nations

VU 678

- 1 For the healing of the nations,
God, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.**

- 2 Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair your world release;
that, redeemed from war and hatred,**

**all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.**

**3 All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.**

**4 You, Creator-God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that, by our response and service,
earth its destiny may find.**

Sending Forth

Go now with your trust in the good shepherd,
and let us love, not just in words,
but in truth and action.
Believe in the name of Jesus Christ,
and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

And may God be at your side, even in valleys of death.
May Christ Jesus be the cornerstone of your life.
And may the Holy Spirit abide in you
...and tend you with love and mercy all the days of your life.
Go in peace, and do the good that is yours to do.
But, as you go, go knowing that you are not alone for you go with...
God, the Source of Love,
Jesus, the Love Incarnate,
And the Holy Spirit, Love's Comfort and Power!
And so we sing...

Music to Send Us Forth

"Fanfare For A Festive Occasion"

End of Worship | Beginning of Service

Welcome to Glebe-St. James United Church.

Thank you for joining with us for our morning worship.

Please join us in Fraser Hall, following the service for a time of fellowship and refreshments.

This week's Music

The setting for "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" for this week's organ prelude is by Douglas A. Wagner. The setting highlights a deep 16' solo stop combination for the melody.

The choir's arrangement of "The 23rd Psalm" is based on a 1990 recording by Bobby McFerrin in which McFerrin records all the vocal parts by overdubbing his own voice. The song was written as a tribute to his mother, Sara McFerrin.

"Fanfare For A Festive Occasion" is by Lani Smith, a prolific American organist and composer who published music under at least seven names.

Musical Acknowledgements

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Glebe-St. James United Church
650 Lyon St. S., Ottawa, ON K1S 3Z7
www.glebestjames.ca 613-236-0617, x 221
admin@glebestjames.ca

Glebe-St James: April 27 – May 2nd

Monday			
	12 noon – 9 pm	GNAG: Guitar lessons	Tower Room
	1 pm	Monday Crafts	Judy Wolanski's
	1 – 3 pm	GMS: Art Class	Art Room
	3:30 – 7 pm	GNAG: after school programming	Art Room & Lounge
	6 – 7:30 pm	Embers	Fraser Hall
	8 pm	Monday Meditation	Zoom
Tuesday			
	10 am	Chess	Sanctuary
	12 noon – 4 pm	GNAG: Guitar lessons	Tower Room
	1:30 pm	Knitting	Lounge
	3:30 – 7 pm	GNAG: after school programming	Art Room, Lounge & Sanctuary
	6:30 – 7:30 pm	Beavers	Fraser Hall
Wednesday			
	3:30 – 5:30 pm	GNAG: after school programming	Art Room & Lounge
	6:30 – 11: pm	Czech Group Seniors	Art Room
	6:30 – 9:30 pm	Canterbury Trebles Rehearsal	Sanctuary
Thursday			
	3:30 – 6:15pm	GNAG: after school programming	Art Room & Lounge
	7 pm	Writing Group	Art Room
	7 pm	GSJ Choir	Sanctuary
	7:30 pm	Venturers	Lounge
Friday			
	1 - 4 pm	GMS: Art Class	Art Room
	3:30 – 6:15pm	GNAG: after school programming	Art Room & Lounge
	5 – 7:30 on	GMS: Dinner	Fraser Hall
	6:30 – 9:30 pm	Canterbury Trebles Rehearsal	Sanctuary
Saturday			
	to 5 pm	Music (Paul)	Sanctuary
	9 am – 1 pm	Exercise with Cate (2 sessions)	Fraser Hall
	5: – 9:30 pm	Canterbury Trebles	Sanctuary/ Art Room
	6:00 – 7:00 pm	Queer Space	Lounge

If you are interested in any of the above events, please contact Jennifer (admin@glebestjames.ca) and she will provide you with contact info.