

# The Glebe-St. James United Church

Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 18, 2026

## Gathered by God

### PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

#### WELCOME

Wendy Bergeron

In the name of the Holy Mystery,  
who is Wholly Love,  
we welcome you to Creator's House.  
**Thanks be to God!**

Good morning and welcome, everyone, to our worship service at Glebe-St. James United Church in downtown Ottawa on Sunday, January 18th.

My name is Wendy Bergeron and I am Chair of Council here at Glebe-St. James.

Rev Teresa has asked us during our welcoming to talk about why we come to Glebe-St. James. Glebe-St. James is my church because it is the place where my soul can take a deep breath. It is the place where music and message uplift me. It is the place where I am sure I will find friends who will make a difference in the world and will help me to do the same.

I chose Glebe-St. James as my new community of faith in 2021, after my church family at St. Paul's-Eastern took the tough decision that it was time for us to find new paths in our individual journeys of faith and disbanded. My choice as I recall was based on a few factors – amongst them, I was attracted by the quality and quantity of information on the GSJ website; I wanted to be part of a Women's Group of like-minded women and WIG afforded me that opportunity and I loved the worship services I listened to online.

But why have I stayed?

All my initial reasons are still valid. But I also have found a new church family of passionate individuals, committed to social justice and making a difference in our church and neighbourhood communities and beyond, willing to try new things and support and guide me in my faith journey.

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.

Friends, note who is seated near you, introduce yourself and invite them to join us for a time of fellowship in Fraser Hall after the service. We also encourage everyone to wear a name tag – they are available at the entrances to the church. Our newer members have told us how important it is to feeling welcome to get to know each other by name. And as I get older, I find it useful for those “senior moments” when I can’t recall the names of the people I already know!

If you are new to Glebe-St. James and want more information, just fill out one of the green cards that are available near the entrances, place it on the offering plate or give it to one of the greeters and they will pass it into the office.

Today's worship service bulletin can be found on the GSJ website, along with a link to this week's announcements and a "donate" button to make your offering. If you are here in person, you can share your offering in the service, either in the collection plate, by e-transfer or through our website - the QR code, found on the back of the pews, will take you to the website.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

This is a busy community, and lots is going on. I will just highlight a couple of announcements, but you will find a more complete list on our website and scrolling on the screens here in the sanctuary before and after our service.

Congratulations friends! We balanced the 2025 budget with a little surplus for wiggle room for those last-minute adjustments...

### **It's a new year and we need volunteers.**

Our leadership team seeks thoughtful people who want to contribute to the future of this church. If you are interested, please connect with Pam Fitch at coffee hour. We also need coffee hosts, welcome readers, scripture readers and people to offer land acknowledgements during our services. If you have never tried any of these jobs but think you might like to help, talk with Pam or Liz Elton or check out the volunteering section on the website. And if you are concerned that you won't know what to do, we will make sure you get support and mentoring from our more experienced members.

Secondly, we are holding another Congregational Conversation on Sunday February 1, here in the sanctuary, immediately following our worship service. As a follow-up to our November conversation, we will be starting to talk about the building and its importance to our spiritual life. Before the meeting starts, we'll gather for our usual coffee hour in Fraser Hall. You may also wish to bring your lunch or something to share to supplement the usual coffee hour offerings before the meeting starts.

And now, let's acknowledge the land on which our sanctuary stands.

#### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

David Brown

For millennia, Indigenous peoples have lived, worked, played, and worshipped here. They have stewarded this land and its beings. Over time people from other parts of the world came to this region and made their homes here. Together, Indigenous people and Settlers share their care for land, water, and sky. May we learn together what this land and its people need and work towards the fulfillment of these needs. This is our commitment.

#### LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE

The season of Epiphany begins with the Magi from a distant land following the star to the child Jesus. They were the first sign that Jesus was a gift for everyone.

**May we continue to seek Christ's enlightening spirit in the company of all people.**

We gather in the light of Christ.

#### CALL TO WORSHIP *(Based on Isaiah 49:1-7)*

Pay attention, you peoples from far away and nearby!

**God called us before we were born;  
while we were in our mother's wombs he named us.**

He got us ready and then hid us away until the time was right.

God said, "You are my servant,  
my people, in whose actions I will be blest."

**But we said, "It's very hard to be your people.**

**Surely you will reward us in the future because we work for you."**

We are your servants and are honoured to live in your sight.

**We will not be able to raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
and restore the survivors of Israel,**

Yet you will give us as a light to the nations,

**That we may tell your story to all peoples –  
even those despots who are reviled.**

Come, It is time to be revealed as your people,  
**It is time to worship our God.**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

We come into your presence, God most holy, in awe and wonder at your great love for us all, no matter who we are, no matter what we've done. Open our hearts to your holy wisdom.

Help us, we pray, to share your love with the world, just as the Wise Ones shared their gifts with the Christ at the first Epiphany.

In his name, and in your love, we pray. Amen!

**HYMN** Come In, Come In, and Sit Down

VU 395

**Come in, come in and sit down,  
you are a part of the family.  
We are lost and we are found,  
and we are a part of the family.**

- 1. You know the reason why you came,  
yet no reason can explain;  
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,  
for we are a part of the family. R**
- 2. God is with us in this place,  
like a mother's warm embrace.  
We're all forgiven by God's grace,  
for we are a part of the family. R**
- 3. There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine;  
we are the branches, Christ is the vine.  
This is God's temple, it's not yours or mine,  
but we are a part of the family. R**
- 4. There's rest for the weary and health for us all;  
there's a yoke that is easy, and a burden that's small.  
So come in and worship and answer the call,  
for we are a part of the family. R**

## **CALL TO HEALING**

Friends, every day we are given choices –  
the choice to be a friend, to be an ally, to extend a welcoming hand.  
Some days we choose wisely, but from time to time, we inevitably get it wrong.

That is one of the many reasons we need the Prayer for Healing.  
In this moment of prayer, we can practice the art of forgiving ourselves and others,  
and being forgiven by one greater than ourselves.  
So join me in this transformative moment.  
Join me in receiving grace. Let us pray.

## **PRAYER FOR HEALING** *(Based on Psalm 40:1-11)*

**Holy One, I try again and again to be patient. as I wait  
for your grace and peace.  
But again and again, I find myself in a pit,  
with quicksand pulling me deeper.  
I don't know why I doubt you, O God,  
When each time I get to that despair,  
You lift me out, and set my feet on solid ground.  
Each time you put a new song in my mouth,  
Giving me another reason to praise you.**

**You say blessed are those who trust in you  
but what about those of us who fail?  
How do we find ways to heal and restore wholeness?  
You have told us again and again that  
Sacrifice and offerings you do not desire.  
So show us what it is you need.  
I am ready to tell others of your great love.**

## **ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE**

**My friends in faith, God has opened our ears to really hear.  
God waits for each of us, in our own time, to experience being called to pray  
'Here I am, ready to do what is written in scripture.'  
Thanks be to God.**

## **SIGN OF PEACE**

One of the hallmarks of faithful living is concern for others –  
we pray for better conditions for people here and throughout the world.  
We seek to enhance love in our homes and workplaces,  
Here and everywhere.  
It is in remembering this sacred duty that I say to you:

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

**HYMN** Hope Shines as the Solitary Star

MV 220

**Hope shines as the solitary star,  
faith is the inner light,  
You and I together mirror the Light of Lights,  
and illumines the pathway home**

## **Listening for Wisdom**

### **THEME CONVERSATION**

### **PRAYER FOR INSIGHT**

Breathe on us, Breath of God, and enlighten us with understanding. May these words take root and grow within our spirits. Amen.

**GOSPEL** John 1:29-42

Barb Coyle

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.” And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One.”

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this,

and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

This is God’s wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

#### **GIFT OF MUSIC**

Jesus is the Light of the World

Don Besig & Nancy Price

#### **EPISTLE 1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

Barb Coyle

Imagine shuffling through your mail only to find an envelope addressed like this:

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

The letter begins...

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is God’s wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

#### **REFLECTION**

Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole

This doesn’t happen very often with the lectionary that provides us preachers with four different scripture choices per day, but today there’s one theme that can be found in all four of our readings from scripture. It’s the notion of being called.

The readings from Isaiah and from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians both begin with words about being called, about being set apart by God. This fits right in with today's section of John's gospel, in which we hear his account of what is usually called "The Call of the First Disciples." John the Baptist points to Jesus and says of him, "Behold the Lamb of God." Two of the Baptist's disciples hear this, decide to check out this Jesus guy, and end up abandoning John and going off with Jesus instead. It's this call, the call of these first two disciples, that is the one we need to pay special attention to if we want to understand what it's usually like to be called by God.

After all, this business of being called is a tricky and an important thing. It's easy to get confused about it, especially the way we use it these days. We tend to equate being called in terms of the language and context in 1 Corinthians and Isaiah. That is, with being told by God to do some specific thing, usually a pretty major thing. We talk of being called to be ordained, or being called to a special – usually a full-time and professional – form of service, almost always in the church.

And that's about all we do with being called, and it's really handy. You see, by looking at things this way, most of us can listen to the story of the call of these disciples and neatly separate what happened to them from what's going on with us. "After all, they were called – we're just ordinary folks." So we're safe from all that call business. It's about someone else.

An interesting perspective on this can be gained by serving on the Board of Vocations. One of the things this Board does is interview people who want to be ordained; and those folks really struggle with this idea of call.

A few of the people interviewed will have had powerful experiences of the presence of God, and they think that this means they have to do something new and different – for Episcopalians, alas, that usually means to run off and get ordained.

But the vast majority of people interviewed have come to where they are through pretty ambiguous, complicated and circuitous paths – paths that have led them to suspect that it might be a good idea to get ordained. At the same time, they aren't sure if they are "called," whatever that might mean. So they all just dread talking to the Board because they know they're going to be asked about it, and they all think they ought to have a better answer than they do.

But the fact is, this whole way of looking at, and at looking for a call from God as a call to a specific job or a task really misses the main point. Sure, there may well be such a thing as a special call to a specific ministry or type of service, although that is both rare and very easily

misunderstood. But that's not usually what the Bible is talking about when it talks about being called; it's not what's really going on in the gospel we just heard; and it's not what is usually going on with us as God calls us.

Being ordained, or being a Partner in Mission (what we used to call a missionary) or being a commissioned diaconal minister or something like that, is quite secondary to the real, the central call we all have from God. Those two followers of John the Baptist who Jesus asked to "come and see" were called exactly as we are called. They were called to be disciples – just as we are called to be disciples. They were called to be disciples in their place and in their time, for the sake of their generation.

One of the things this means is that we don't have to imitate Andrew's, or John's, or Peter's actions in order to see, with some clarity, how their call is like the call of Christ to each of us, and to all of us.

The first thing to notice is that Jesus does not first, or primarily, call them to do a particular task or to fill a particular role. Indeed, he didn't ask them to do anything. Our call as Christians is not initially for us – as it was not, initially, for his first disciples – a call to tasks. It is, instead, an invitation to relationship. Jesus does not say, "Do this"; he says, "Come and see." Only later does he give specific content and direction to where that might lead. There's a big difference between a call to a task and an invitation to relationship.

To respond to a call for relationship, for intimacy, is a very different thing from signing up to do a piece of work – in the same way that falling in love is very different from getting hired. To set out to do a job requires some clarity about what is involved, it's negotiable, it has its limits, you know what it looks like when the job is over, and so on. To be called into relationship – to be called in love – this is an invitation to enter a mystery; it's to move out, blindly, into uncharted waters.

When Jesus says, "Follow me," he is calling us first to himself – to a personal intimacy and a shared life. That's what matters, that's what is primary. Everything else is left behind; everything else becomes secondary.

Now, if we look at Jesus' call from the perspective of what's left behind, it's a call to repent. But if we see that same call from the perspective of what comes next, then it's a call to seek him first, to know him better and to move toward making that relationship the central focus of our lives.

When we are called, and we *are* called, each and every one of us – just look again at our Baptismal Covenant – this is primarily a call to be held by Jesus for a while, and not to go

anywhere, not to do anything. It's a call to find out where Jesus lives, and to spend some time living there. By and by, this will lead us somewhere. But we won't know where for a while, maybe not for a long while.

This is why a sense of call – something that wanders through our lives from time to time – can often be both frightening and frustrating. We might know something, perhaps something very important, is going on; something that has to do with all of our life and much more. Then, grabbing on to the wrong notion of a call from God, we start looking for what we are called to do. After all, we live in a society that insists that for something to be important it has to produce.

Instead of that, we are, especially at the beginning, simply asked to get to know God and Jesus a little better. It's a call to listen, and to wait. It's a time to imitate the psalmist, a time to "listen to what the Lord God is saying." We need that first. We need that most.

This is what happened to those first disciples – they stayed close to Jesus for a while. They learned what they could and came to know him a little. Then, admittedly long before they thought they were ready, Jesus gave them things to do. For some, these tasks were dramatic, for others they were quiet and invisible. The call to Jesus will always, in one form or another, find expression in ministry. But the call comes first. There can be no real, abiding and sustaining ministry without relationship with Christ, without obedience to him as he calls us to himself.

We are called to be disciples. Each of us. That call comes with our baptism, and that call to relationship and ministry will haunt us, and track us down; it will trouble our sleep and whisper in our ears at the worst possible times. It will grow stronger and weaker and stronger again. It may seem to go away, but it always comes back. Because finally, it's our Lord calling us to himself. It's his call to life, to joy and to true peace. It's a call to all of us.

## **Responding in Thanksgiving**

**HYMN** I Have Called You By Your Name

MV 161

- 1. I have called you by your name, you are mine;  
I have gifted you and ask you now to shine.  
I will not abandon you;  
all my promises are true.  
You are gifted, called, and chosen;  
you are mine.**

2. I will help you learn my name as you go;  
read it written in my people, help them grow.  
Pour the water in my name,  
speak the word your soul can claim,  
offer Jesus' body given long ago.
  
3. I know you will need my touch as you go;  
feel it pulsing in creation's ebb and flow.  
Like the woman reaching out,  
choosing faith in spite of doubt,  
hold the hem of Jesus' robe,  
then let it go.
  
4. I have given you a name, it is mine;  
I have given you my Spirit as a sign.  
With my wonder in your soul,  
make my wounded children whole;  
go and tell my precious people  
they are mine.

#### **INVITATION TO GIVE**

We are called to be the embodiment of God's Word. We are called to use our whole selves to care for creation, community, and the church. You are invited to share your financial gifts for the ministry and work of both this community of faith and Mission and Service. Together we will speak God's kin-dom into being.

**OFFERING HYMN** All Is Given for the Glory of God

(Verse 4) MV 34

**All is giv'n for the glory of God.  
Amen! Amen!  
All is giv'n upon our glorious God.  
Amen! Amen!  
Amen! Amen! Amen!  
All is giv'n for the glory of God.  
Amen! Amen!**

## OFFERING PRAYER

There is so much that needs doing, O God, and we have no magic wand to get it done without effort, and no gold, frankincense, and myrrh to finance our efforts.

Here is our offering, but we also present our lives so that, in your grace, all of our offerings may meet the needs to which they are directed. Give us wisdom and courage as we seek to offer all that we are in your work. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Light of Christ

*Gathering*

**Light of Christ shine in and through me,  
Light of Love be with me now.  
Take these hands, healing hands.  
Light of Christ flow through me now.**

## 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.**

## **Sent by the Spirit**

## HYMN We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection

VU 586

- 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.

2. We'll give a voice to those who have not spoken;  
we'll find the words for those whose lips are sealed;  
we'll make the tunes for those who sing no longer,  
expressive love alive in every heart.  
We'll share our joy with those who still are weeping,  
raise hymns of strength for hearts that break in grief,  
we'll leap and dance the resurrection story,  
including all in circles of our love.

#### **SENDING FORTH**

May blessings abound around you this day.  
Feeling God's loving presence among us, let us go forth into the world,  
allowing our light to shine on all we meet.

#### **MUSIC TO SEND US FORTH**

## ***End of Worship – Beginning of Service***

#### **MUSICAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**We welcome you and thank you for joining us this morning.  
Please join us in Fraser Hall following the service for coffee and fellowship.**

**Name tags:**

If you ordered a name tag before Christmas, please check with Alex in the office. They are in.  
Cost is \$ 25.00

**Women's Intergenerational Group**

Join us after coffee hour today. Our speaker is a young Afghan woman who fled Afghanistan when it fell to the Taliban. She has rebuilt her life here in Ottawa and works full-time at OMRA supporting Afghan and other newcomer women as they navigate settlement challenges. OMRA provides rent subsidies through participation in the Grocery card program.

**Labyrinth:** Today, 3 – 5 pm.

This month's walk is a Grief Walk – see poster at Fraser Hall.

Questions – please speak with Judy Wolanski

**Congregational Conversation**

Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, after Coffee Hour.

As a follow-up to our November conversation, we will be starting to talk about the building and its importance to our spiritual life.

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