

The Glebe-St. James United Church

Thanksgiving Sunday

October 12, 2025

Gathered by God

PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

Sheep may safely graze
Aria from the Suite in D

J.S. Bach, arr. S. Drummond Wolff
J.S. Bach, arr. S. Drummond Wolff

WELCOME

Liz Elton

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 October 12 – Thanksgiving Sunday.

My name is Liz Elton and I am involved in music and worship here at Glebe-St. James.

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 and extend our hospitality. If you want more information about Glebe-St. James, green cards are available near the entrances and during coffee hour. Just fill one out and 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, on the back of the pews, will take you to the website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is a busy community, and lots is going on. You will find the announcements of activities on our website and scrolling on the screens here in the sanctuary before and after our service. In the interests of time, I will highlight just three.

Photo Directory

Something you can do for us! Help GSJ have a complete photo directory of our Church 'people'. Adherents, members, occasional attendees are all welcome to participate! Just come and have your picture taken for inclusion in our directory. This is at no cost to you.

Universal Photos will be in the church on **November 7, 8 and 10th** between the hours of 12 noon and 9:00 pm. They will photograph you and your family, pets, grandchildren, and display them for you immediately. The photo session is at no cost to you, however if you wish to purchase any pictures there is a cost. You may submit your own photo but there will be a \$25.00 charge if you would like a directory.

Check the posters around the church and call Brenda at 1-888-769-7339, Ext 1 to book your appointment. If you have any difficulty and need assistance, Jennifer, in the office, can help you.

Everyone is invited to participate – whether you have been coming to Glebe St. James for 50 years or 50 days, join in to make our Directory as complete as possible!

Gaps in the Worship Schedule. Have you ever considered reading Scripture, doing the Welcome or Land Acknowledgement? It's a brief few minutes in worship! And, Rev. Teresa writes the worship service script and is ready to help out with someone willing to give the land acknowledgement. Not a public speaker? Partner with someone to do coffee hour. It's easier than it looks! Many hands make lighter work friends – and doesn't burn anyone out.

Read the e-update – it is the digital weekly update of the lives and activities happening in our congregation. It really will keep you abreast of what's going on. Sign up for it in the office.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Teresa

Canadian Thanksgiving isn't the Pilgrims and Indians story we get flooded with every year by American media. Canadian thanksgiving *is* intercultural. It's Indigenous roots go deep – way back before Europeans were here on Turtle Island. Most, if not all, Indigenous communities had rites of thanksgiving that were woven into their practices around the fall harvest. Sir Martin Frobisher and his crew are credited as the first Europeans to celebrate a Thanksgiving ceremony in North America, in 1578. They were followed by the inhabitants of New

France under Samuel de Champlain in 1606. The celebration featuring the uniquely North American turkey, squash and pumpkin was introduced to Nova Scotia in the 1750s and became common across Canada by the 1870s. The holiday we celebrate on the second Monday in October, friends, dates from 1957. I like the idea that Canadian thanksgiving began with the deep cycle of the earth's bounty recognized as life-giving by the Indigenous people who, here in this region, are the Algonquin who have never unceded or surrendered this land, and who continue to care for her.

And now, let us prepare our hearts and minds for Worship.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE I Am Sending You Light

TLUS 99, *chorus only*

**I am sending you light to heal you, to hold you.
I am sending you light to hold you in love.
I am sending you light to heal you to hold you.
I am sending you light to hold you in love.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

God says, "I will fill your cup and then some."

We come now to receive.

Jesus says, "I bring abundant life to all."

We come now to share.

Spirit says, "I fill your hearts with love."

We come now to love.

Let us worship God.

HYMN We Praise You, O God

VU 218

**We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.**

**We worship you, God of our mothers and fathers,
through trial and tempest, companion and guide.
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,
but faithful to your promise, you walk by our side.**

**With voices united our praises we offer
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing,
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!**

OPENING PRAYER

**Holy and gracious God,
we gather as seekers, lovers, disciples, and friends.
We gather to give you thanks for the blessings of our lives
and to replenish and refuel for the road ahead.
We gather to learn the wisdom of your way and feel the warmth of your love.
Bless this gathering as we join together in wholehearted worship. Amen.**

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 build peace in our homes and workplaces,
and on the national and international stages.
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 Peace for the Children

MV 149

**Peace for the children, peace peace.
Peace for the children we pray.
Following the path of One of peace,
we work for healing, we work for peace;
peace for the children today.**

**Peace for the nations, peace peace.
Peace for nations, we pray.
Following the path of One of peace,
we work for healing, we work for peace;
peace for the nations today.**

Listening for Wisdom

THEME CONVERSATION Mark 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

PRAYER FOR INSIGHT

Holy One,
as we listen once more to the wisdom of your Word,
may we be fed both in mind and body.
Help us open to your revelation of love
and to receive your blessing with grace.

GOSPEL Psalm 26

Edith Gardell

Judge me favorably, O God,
because I have walked with integrity
and I have trusted you without wavering.
Examine me, O God, and test me.
Look closely into my heart and mind.
I see your mercy in front of me.
I walk in the light of your truth.
I did not sit with liars,
and I will not be found among hypocrites.
I have hated the mob of evildoers
and will not sit with wicked people.
I will wash my hands in innocence.
I will walk around your altar, O God
so that I may loudly sing a hymn of thanksgiving
and tell about all your miracles.

O God, I love the house where you live,
the place where your glory dwells.

Do not sweep away my soul along with hardened sinners
or my life along with bloodthirsty people.
Evil schemes are in their hands.
Their right hands are full of bribes.
But I walk with integrity.
Rescue me, and have pity on me.
My feet stand on level ground.
I will praise God with the choirs in worship.

This is wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

GIFT OF MUSIC For the Beauty of the Earth

John Rutter

REFLECTION

Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole

I bet various people in your life have imparted wisdom to you, maybe in the form of sage sayings. One of my family members was fond of saying, “Everyone puts their pants on one leg at a time.” My mother has often advised, “Never go to bed angry.” My Dad, a carpenter, is fond of saying, “Measure twice. Cut once.” “If you have a nugget of wisdom that has been passed on to you, I would invite you to share it with the person sitting beside you.”

The imparting of wisdom is likely as key in your life as it has been in mine. We need to know the best way to brush our teeth, to wash our clothes, to share, to live a life.

It’s no wonder that wisdom is such a prominent feature in the Hebrew scripture. Our life depends on one generation imparting wisdom to the next and vice versa.

In the Bible, wisdom literature and wisdom sayings are guidelines for faith, a kind of instruction manual in how to live the good life. The words from Deuteronomy “I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30: 19) outline what wisdom literature tries to do. It aims to set us on the right path. It is especially helpful when we feel lost.

Often, wisdom is shared in times when we especially need it. I was reminded that everyone puts their pants on one leg at a time when I was feeling intimidated by someone whom I perceived as more powerful and capable. I was reminded not to go to bed angry when I was in the heat of an argument. I was told to measure twice and cut once when I was going too fast for my own good.

Tension (or the potential for tension) often precipitates the imparting of wisdom. Psalm 26 is couched in tension. From the outset, there is a cry for vindication. There's something off. Some scholars think Psalm 26 was written after the exile when the writer or writers were feeling particularly challenged—the perfect time for wisdom!

While the psalm is traditionally viewed as a type of liturgy, there is considerable evidence that it is a piece of wisdom literature. It bears many of the same hallmarks as literature found in the Book of Proverbs, especially in its themes and form.

For example, Psalm 26 has a concentric structure typical of wisdom literature. It is very carefully crafted to circle back on itself. So, verses 1–3 have to do with right walking. Verses 4–5 discuss how the psalmist disassociates from wickedness. Verses 6–8 talks about ritual purity and liturgy. And then the psalm circles back to the beginning. Verses 9–10 have to do with how the psalmist isn't destroyed by the wicked. And verses 11–12 return to right walking. That idea of “right walking” or “being on the right route” or the potential to go one of two ways—the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked is a core metaphor in wisdom literature. We heard it in Deuteronomy 30: “Life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life.” Some believe that such a choice is suggested in Robert Frost's “The Road Not Taken.”

There's never a doubt in the scripture that we are on a journey. From the Garden of Eden to the book of Revelation and all points in between, God's people are on the move. Psalm 26 is no less busy. The psalmist talks about walking in faithfulness, going around the altar, walking in integrity, standing on level ground as opposed to (in verses 4 and 5) sitting with the worthless or the wicked—hitting a dead end. Righteousness is going with God.

Psalm 26 is truly wisdom for the road.

The wisdom we hear from the old words of Psalm 26 may sound like the wisdom that you thought about at the beginning of this sermon and which you shared with the person next to you. It might sound like something your aunt or your mother or your friend shared with you in a time of uncertainty or stress. In our congregational life, it might sound like the wisdom that comes when we pray or sing in one voice, or when we sit around our decision-making tables and decide where to direct our human resources and financial resources that they might have the most positive impact in our community and world.

That's how I would invite us to listen to the wisdom in these psalms—as though a trusted friend or mentor or respected congregant was passing the wisdom on to us. Listen to the paraphrase of Psalm 26 in that knowing, loving tone:

Go with God.
Move with faithfulness.
Don't waste your time on stuff that detracts you from what is holy.
Sing.
Be thankful.
Wonder.
Have integrity.
Stay grounded.
Go with God.

Now, each one of us here knows that our ability to receive words of wisdom is directly proportional to the venue in which they are shared. For example, some wisdom may be imparted to us across a kitchen table over a steaming cup of coffee. Or wisdom may be given when we are sweating buckets of distress, and the words shared with us hit us right in the heart, and we are instantly calm.

Where do you imagine you would be, to be most open to hearing God's words of wisdom from Psalm 26? When are you most receptive to hearing such words of wisdom?

Maybe during a quiet moment by a lake? Or in the midst of the joyful bustle of friends over Thanksgiving dinner? Maybe in a moment of prayer when you are like a child curled up on Jesus' lap as described in today's reading from the Gospel of Mark. In whatever circumstance you think you are most apt to be impressed by God's wisdom, imagine being there. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable. Listen to the Spirit speak to you now:

Go with God.
Move with faithfulness.
Don't waste your time on stuff that detracts you from what is holy.
Sing.
Be thankful.
Wonder.
Have integrity.
Stay grounded.
Go with God.

May God who creates you give you light.
May God who sustains you make you wise.
May God who protects you give you joy.
May God who surrounds you give you peace.

May we know the deepest blessing of God on the road of life.
May God's wisdom make us wise.
May we be thankful.
Amen.

Responding in Thanksgiving

HYMN Grateful

MV 182

Refrain:

**Grateful for the life you give us,
thankful for your Holy Son,
joyful in your Spirit flowing over all,
O God of Love.**

**Grateful for the Bread of Heaven,
thankful for your Holy Word,
joyful in your mercy flowing,
we will praise you.**

- 1. You are more than we imagine,
Ancient, Holy, Living God.
Even when we doubt your presence
you are faithful to your Word. R**
- 2. May our lives proclaim your justice,
may our voices sing your praise.
May our hands work in your service
to the glory of your name. R**

INVITATION TO GIVE

Now in response to God's love and generosity,
let us take up our offering in support of the mission and ministry of our congregation
and the Mission and Service of our wider church.

**Ev'ry day is a day of thanksgiving.
God, you've been so good to me.
Ev'ry day you're blessing me.
Ev'ry day is a day of thanksgiving.
I will glorify you, O my God today!**

OFFERING PRAYER

Like the psalmist, gracious God,
we love living with you
and we are grateful for our many blessings.
We love knowing that you are present with us
as we journey through life.
With thanksgiving in our hearts,
we pray that our gifts of time, talent,
and treasure will bless our neighbours,
near and far. Amen.

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 Let All Things Now Living

VU 242

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
to God our Creator triumphantly raise;
who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
by guiding us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us, pure light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night;
till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into Light.

By law God enforces, the stars in their courses
and sun in its orbit obediently shine;
the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We, too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
with glad adoration a song let us raise:
till all things now living unite in thanksgiving,
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

SENDING FORTH

In the spirit of Thanksgiving,
Go into the world, this week,
Determined to share God's lavish love
With all whom you encounter.
Go love God,
Go love yourselves, and
Go love others,
Knowing that God the Source of love,
Jesus, the Love in Human Love,
And the Holy Spirit, Love's comfort and power,
Go with you!

SUNG AMEN

Merritt in G

MUSIC TO SEND US FORTH

Toccata on The Old-Time Religion

Gordon Young

End of Worship - Beginning of Service

Thank you to all who participated in today's service – you stand among the saints of GSJ! Please join us in Fraser Hall following the service for coffee and fellowship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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E-Update

The e-update is available online or you can sign up to get it by e-mail. More information on the following events is available in our e-update or contact Jennifer (admin@glebestjames.ca) and she can help.

October 19th in Fraser Hall

10:30 am	Café Church
Following Coffee time	Women's Intergenerational Group
3-5 pm	Come walk the Labyrinth

...At Glebe-St. James

Monday Crafts @ Judy's, 1-4 pm
Monday Meditation, weekly at 8 pm on zoom
Check Mates – weekly on Tuesdays, 10 am (Sanctuary)
Nattering Knitters – weekly on Tuesdays, 1:30 pm (Lounge)
Men & Friends' Potluck, October 29th, 5:30 (Fraser Hall)

Our Ministry Team...

Coordinating Minister: Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole, ex 24; Revtbc.gsj@gmail.com

Children's Church Leader: Kayla Cseh, ex 22; Childrenchurch.gsj@gmail.com

Minister of Music: James Caswell, ex 25; music.gsj@gmail.com

Minister of Music Emeritus: Robert Palmai

Accounts: Lori Stinson, ex 23; accts.glebestjames@gmail.com

Church Administrator: Jennifer Reid, ex 21; admin@glebestjames.ca

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