

**CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH**  
**Lunenburg, Nova Scotia**  
**February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

**Minister:** Rev. Daniel MacDonald

**Minister of Music:** John Scott

**Lay Reader:** Rachel Bailey

**Greeters:** Janet Robertson & Jim Pittman

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Email: [centralsecretary@bellaliant.com](mailto:centralsecretary@bellaliant.com)

VU: Voices United (red book)

Website: [www.centralunitedlunenburg.ca](http://www.centralunitedlunenburg.ca)

MV: More Voices (spiral-bound book)

*We welcome and celebrate human diversity - including spirituality, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. Here, people of any faith or none can question and discover the sacred in life through openness, struggle, laughter, prayer and music.*

**Prelude**

**Gathering Music:** “*Welcome Into This Place*”

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time, G clef, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are integrated into the music, with each line of text corresponding to a staff. The lyrics are:

Wel - come in - to this place. Wel - come in - to this  
bro - ken ves - sel. You de - sire to a - bide in the  
prais - es of Your peo - ple, so we lift our hands and we  
lift our hearts, as we of - fer up this praise un - to Your name.

Words & Music  
Orlando Juarez

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

## **Call to Worship:**

People of God,  
this is Jesus' first teaching in Matthew's Gospel:  
**“Blessed are you.”**

Blessed are you, people of God,  
through all the days of our lives.  
Through joy and sorrow,  
through hardship and celebration,  
this truth remains:  
**“Blessed are you.”**

With this Divine promise written on our hearts,  
let us worship God, proclaiming:  
**“O God, blessed are You!”**

**Hymn:**           *“When The Poor Ones”*

**VU #702**

## **Words of Welcome and Acknowledgement of Land**

### **Prayer for Renewal:**

**Since ancient times, we have been called to seek justice,  
to love kindness and to walk humbly with you, O God,  
and we have tried our best to do just that, but we confess,  
at times, it's a struggle.**

**At times, we seek not justice but comfort,  
at times, we love not kindness, but power and wealth,  
at times we walk not humbly, not gently, but forcefully,  
brazenly ignoring others and trampling creation.**

**Forgive us the times when we do not see the gift of your  
blessing in one another and those other than ourselves.  
Forgive us the times we have been persecutors rather than  
peacemakers, mean, not merciful, judgemental not just.  
Forgive us and help us to see this world through the eyes of  
Christ, who saw even in the most unexpected of places and  
people, the promise of blessing. With open hearts, we ask it.  
Amen.**

## **A Time for Silent Reflection and Prayer Words of Assurance**

## A Moment to Honour African Heritage Month

**Hymn:** “*Amen Siakudumisa (Amen, We Praise Your Name O Lord)*”

Xhosa pronunciation  
*A-men see-ah-koo-doo-mee-sah*  
*A-men, bah-woh (amen, father)*

Stephen Cuthbert Molefe

A - men, we praise your name, O God!  
A - men, we praise your name, O God!  
A - men, a - men.  
A - men, ba - wo.  
A - men, we praise your name, O God!

### Scripture Reading:

*First Testament:* Micah 6:6-8  
*Gospel:* Matthew 5:1-12

**Hymn:** “*Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace*” **VU #684**

### Sermon

## Hymn: *“Keep Your Lamps Trimmed And Burning”*

African American Spiritual

Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing; keep your  
It's our faith makes us hap - py; it's our  
We are climb - ing Ja - cob's lad - der; we are  
Ev - ery round goes high - er, high - er, ev - ery

lamps trimmed and burn - ing; keep your  
faith makes us hap - py; it's our  
climb - ing Ja - cob's lad - der; we are  
round goes high - er, high - er, ev - ery

lamps trimmed and burn - ing for the time is draw-ing nigh.  
faith makes us hap - py, for the time is draw-ing nigh.  
climb - ing Ja - cob's lad - der, for the time is draw-ing nigh.  
round goes high - er, high - er, for the time is draw-ing nigh.

Sis-ters, don't grow wear - y; broth-ers, don't grow wear - y; chil-dren,  
don't grow wear - y, for the time is draw-ing nigh.

*Jacob's dream tells of a ladder stretching between earth and heaven,  
a sign that God is not distant, but deeply connected to human life.*

*When we sing that 'every round goes higher, higher,'  
we're naming that steady climb of faith — growing, changing,  
and being lifted toward God's way of love and justice.*

**We Celebrate the Life and Work of our Community**

## We Share Our Offerings

Offertory Hymn: *“From You I Receive”*

Joseph and Nathan Segel

From you I re - ceive, to you I give, to -  
geth-er we share, and from this we live.

## Dedication of Our Gifts:

You ask not, O God, that we give you our shiniest toonies,  
our crispest bills, our most extravagant treasures.

You ask, only that we work with you for the good of others,  
that we live lives of humility, compassion and kindness,  
that we act with mercy and justice always.

May these gifts that we offer today be a reflection of our  
commitment to work, and to live and to act as you call us.

May this simple offering be blessed into service for this world,  
a seed from which kindness, mercy and justice might grow.

In Jesus' name, we ask it. Amen.

Sung Invitation to Prayer - *“I Am A Child Of God”* MV #157

## Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Hymn: *“Guide My Feet”*

1. Guide my feet while I run this race, Guide my feet  
while I run this race, Guide my feet while I run this  
race, for I don't want to run this race in vain.  
2. Hold my hand... 3. Stand by me... 4. I'm your child... 5. Guide my feet...

## **Commissioning and Benediction**

### **Postlude**

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*Our call to worship today was written by the Rev. Penny Nelson,  
while serving at Tatamagouche Pastoral Charge.  
Used with gratitude and permission.*

## **Music for Black History Month & Lent Listening, Community, and Shared Faith**

Throughout Black History Month and into Lent, our worship will include music rooted in African and African-diaspora traditions. This is not meant as entertainment or as a one-time cultural feature, but as a way of listening more deeply to how faith is lived, carried, and shared in different communities. These musical traditions come from real histories of struggle, joy, endurance, prayer, and hope. They remind us that music is not just something we sing — it is a way faith is practiced, remembered, and strengthened. By returning to these traditions over several weeks, we are invited to move beyond novelty and toward relationship: learning to listen, to sing together, and to allow shared music to shape our understanding of God, one another, and the world we live in.

### ***What to Expect Each Week***

#### **Week 1 – Gathering & Identity**

Music that helps us find our shared voice. These songs emphasize rhythm, call-and-response, and collective breath, reminding us that faith is something we carry together.

#### **Week 2 – Lament & Truth-Telling**

Music that makes space for sorrow, waiting, and honest prayer. These songs do not rush to easy answers, but allow grief and longing to be named within faith.

#### **Week 3 – Joy as Strength**

Music that expresses joy not as denial, but as a source of resilience. Here, joy becomes a way of surviving, witnessing, and holding onto hope.

#### **Week 4 – Sending & Witness**

Music that turns outward, carrying faith beyond the church walls. These songs connect worship with daily life, justice, and shared responsibility.

#### **Into Lent – Pilgrimage & Deepening**

As we move into Lent, the same traditions will continue in a quieter, more reflective way. The music will become simpler and more spacious, supporting prayer, endurance, and trust — holding hope without rushing past struggle.

#### **At the heart of this plan:**

This music invites us to listen, to learn, and to sing in ways that build community and help us respond faithfully to our world.

**AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH**  
***Strength in Unity: Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power, and Progress.***



**Dr. Geraldine Browning (1934-2025)** was born and raised in the historic African Nova Scotia community of East Preston. She dedicated her life to faith, family and the fight for justice and equality. A lifelong community activist, teacher and nurse, Geraldine began her career in nursing in Montreal and carried that same spirit of care into every role she held. Over the years she became known across the province as a "people and community builder", using her voice and energy to uplift others and create opportunities for the next generation.

Despite a busy family life, Geraldine always found time to serve her community. She helped establish and lead several key organizations supporting African Nova Scotia communities, including the Black Cultural Society, the Black Business Initiative and the Valley African Nova Scotia Development Association (VANSDA). Her work with these, and many other organizations, focused on improving social and economic conditions, promoting education and literacy and challenging systemic racism.

In recognition of her decades of service, Geraldine received an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Acadia University in 2014 and was invested into the Order of Nova Scotia in 2017. In addition, she received the Queen's Diamond and Platinum Jubilee medals.