

CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH
Lunenburg, Nova Scotia
February 22nd, 2026 – 1st Sunday in Lent

Minister: Rev. Daniel MacDonald

Minister of Music: John Scott

Lay Reader: Dawn Ernst

Greeters: Tom Ritcey

Email: centralsecretary@bellaliant.com

VU: Voices United (red book)

Website: 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 G major, common time, and a treble clef. 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:

Today, we set out together

**carrying our anxieties, our doubts, our burdens, our joys,
our living, breathing, wondering selves.**

Today, we set out together

**with feet cracked and calloused, others nimble and smooth,
with hearts full of longing, full of wonder,
others hesitant but hopeful.**

Today, we set out together

**the wilderness beckons, and we journey on,
seeking to blaze a new path through a world on fire.
or rather return to an old, and ancient one,
finding ourselves along the way.**

Today, we set out together.

**May our journey be blessed
as we walk together in the Way.**

Hymn: *“Love Will Be Our Lenten Calling”*



Love will be our Len - ten____ cal - ling, love to shake and
Peace will be our Len - ten____ li - ving as we turn for
Truth will be our Len - ten____ lea - ning: hear the Cru - ci -



shat - ter____ sin, wa - king ev - ery closed, cold____ spi - rit,
home a - gain, long - ing for the words of____ par - don,
fied One____ call! Sha-dowed by the Sa - viour's pas - sion,



stir - ring new life deep with - in, till the quick-ened
strip - ping off old grief and____ pain, till we stand, re -
i - ma - ges and i - dols____ fall, and, in Eas - ter's



heart re - mem - bers what our Eas - ter birth can mean.
stored and joy - ful, with the Church on Eas - ter____ day.
ho - ly splen - dour, God a - lone is all in____ all.

Words of Welcome and Acknowledgement of Land

A Prayer for the Journey:

**Journeying with you, Creator God,
is to journey in your world, full of marvels and such beauty.
To glimpse eternity in sky and sea,
to feel the earth and rock beneath our feet.**

**Journeying with you, brother Jesus,
is to journey with your friends.
To meet and travel a while together,
then part at the crossroads, knowing you are with us all.**

**Journeying with you, Holy Spirit,
is to journey with the wind.
To move to your wild music, then try to sing your song
so others may hear.**

**Journey with us this Lent
and help us to glimpse, to meet, to move, to sing
in a way that opens us to you and one another.
This we ask, as we name in silence
our hopes for the journey ahead.**

A Time for Silent Reflection and Prayer

Words of Assurance

Hymn: *“Jesus, Tempted In The Desert”*

VU #115

Scripture Reading:

Gospel: *Matthew 4:1-11*

Sermon

Hymn: *“Bless Now, O God, The Journey”*

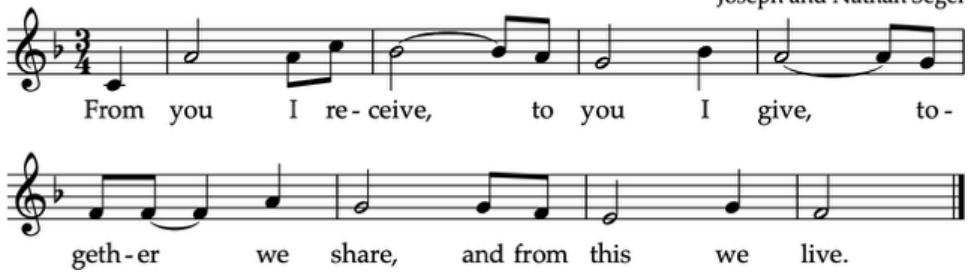
VU #633

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:

God of every journey,
Let the gifts we offer today
become stepping stones of peace and justice.
Let them smooth the path ahead
for those whose way is rough.
Let them forge a trail of hope
through the wilderness of despair and oppression.
Let them be a waymarker of love and kindness,
for all who feel lost,
and let them be the welcome rest
at the end of every hard trek.
God of every journey, bless our gifts,
as we continue to walk in your Way.
Amen.

We Celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

Hymn to the Table:

“When We Are Tested”

MV #65

The Great Thanksgiving

God is here.

Always and Forever.

Let us remember!

With all that we are!

God of the wind and the sky, God of the earth and the soil.
God of the path that lays before us, and the road that led us here,
In the beginning,
before the beginning,
before the before,
you were there.

You and the chaotic nothingness.
Then, exploding with love, you gave life it's life!

Your heart burst with an explosion of grace....
...and then from that holy stardust, those sacred beginnings,
you formed us in your image,
naming us and all creation good,
inviting us to journey with you in Love.

At times, we journeyed with you eagerly, at times, we held back.
But still, you sought us out, across the ages,
encouraging us on our way, time and time again...

...You have turned up beside us in the guise of friend and stranger,
prophet and teacher, pilgrim and traveller.
You have made all things new.

And so – grateful for your presence with us on life's every journey and
across time and space, we join with all those who have walked
the Way before us, and with creation itself, proclaiming your praise:

Holy, holy, holy are you, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!

Mindful of all who have shared this journey of love with us,
we give thanks in this moment
for the trailblazer that was Jesus the Christ...

...on the night that he gave himself up for the path of justice,
he was at the table with his friends.
He invited them and he invites us
to pause in our quest for destinations,

and savour the company of each other
and the ways in which he still is present in our gathering together...

And so, here at the threshold of one more Lenten journey,
we gather to eat and drink and remember,
gathering strength and nourishment for the Way ahead,
as we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Blessing of the Elements

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing of the Feast

Prayer after Communion:

As we set out together into the wilds of this Lenten season,
we have been fed with your love once again, O God.
May the nourishment we've received here in bread and wine and
community so strengthen us for the journey ahead
that we might follow with courage, conviction and hope,
the path that is laid before us,
even when it takes us in new and challenging directions.
nourishing and caring for one another and others
along the Way.

With Christ as our guide, we set out.

With Christ as our guide, we pray. Amen.

Closing Hymn: “*Be Thou My Vision*”

VU #642

Commissioning and Benediction

Postlude

Some of our prayers today have been inspired by materials written by Marcia McFee or adapted for our use from resources first written by members of the Iona Community. Used with gratitude and permission.

AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Strength in Unity: Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power, and Progress



When the deepest coal mine in North America "bumped", an unlikely hero emerged. **Maurice Ruddick**, known as the "Singing Miner", was an African Nova Scotian man whose music and leadership saved the lives of his fellow miners.

Maurice Ruddick was born to a coal mining family in Joggins, Nova Scotia. He became an amateur boxer in his teens and, after finishing Grade 11, commenced work in the coal mines of nearby Springhill, NS. The descendants of enslaved persons who were brought to Nova Scotia by Loyalists in the late-18th century, Ruddick and his wife Norma were among a handful of people who formed the Black Community of Springhill, where they raised a family of twelve children.

The Springhill No. 2 coal mine had a "bump" (similar to an earthquake) on October 23, 1958, killing 75 men. Seven men, including Maurice Ruddick, were trapped together around 3 km deep in the mine for 8 ½ days. On a normal workday and occasionally while trapped, Ruddick led hymns and rhythms like "The Old Rugged Cross" to keep others' spirits up. Being trapped for 8 ½ days took its toll on all of them in different ways. Ruddick said, "I cried in the darkness, but I made sure that nobody else heard me. It might have broken their resolve to live." Other miners' mothers and wives said that "if it wasn't for Maurice, they'd all have been dead."

The rescue became a media sensation. One of the survivors was invited to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, while Ruddick also

became a brief celebrity. After he was quoted as saying, “Give me a glass of water and I’ll sing you a song,” upon his rescue, he garnered profiles under headlines such as “Cheerful After Ordeal” and “Hero Keeps Comrades’ Spirits Up.” The story caught the attention of Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin, who invited the surviving men and their wives to a resort on Jekyll Island. But upon learning that Ruddick was Black, Griffin insisted that Ruddick be segregated from the group, stay in a trailer outside the resort and rest at a separate beach. When his colleagues refused to go without him, Ruddick and his wife Norma chose to accept the governor’s half-hearted invitation. “This might be a chance to open some people’s eyes,” said Ruddick.

Maurice Ruddick was named Canada's Citizen of the Year in 1958, and in 2015 the African Nova Scotia Music Association presented him a Lifetime Achievement Award which is given to a musician or group who has impacted the African Nova Scotian music scene. He was also featured in a Canadian Heritage Minute.

Ruddick's daughter, folk singer Val MacDonald, recorded a song that he composed in the mine, "The Springhill Mine Disaster Song."