

**CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH**  
**Lunenburg, Nova Scotia**  
**March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent**

**Minister:** Rev. Daniel MacDonald  
**Minister of Music:** John Scott  
**Lay Reader:** Natasha Backs  
**Greeters:** Sherrie & Ivan Carey

Email: [centralsecretary@bellaliant.com](mailto:centralsecretary@bellaliant.com) Website: [www.centralunitedlunenburg.ca](http://www.centralunitedlunenburg.ca)

*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**  
**Words of Welcome**

**Call to Worship and Opening Prayer:**

We could be at home sleeping  
We could be relaxing the weekend away.

**And yet, we are here.**

But, why are we here? Why are you here?

**To find community. To feel connection.**

**To know and be known.**

**To love and be loved.**

**To encounter and be encountered.**

**To change and be changed.**

By Spirit? By Christ? By God?

By grace? By mystery? By the Holy?

**Yes. Yes. Yes.**

**Yes. Yes. Yes.**

Well then, let's worship together.

Let's seek together.

Let's journey together in faith.

*Let us pray:*

**There is a place, Holy One, somewhere deep within us, that draws us closer to grace, that calls us forward towards faith, that stirs us into service and unites us in Spirit. In worship, we seek to meet you here,**

**but also there: in the depths of our being, in the ground of our souls, in our heart of hearts.**

**So, find us there and find us here.**

**Be in our community, and in our very body.**

**Be among us and within us.**

**Plant your Spirit in the open furrows of our own spirits, and bear fruit,**

**encountering us as we seek to be encountered,**

**loving us as we yearn to be loved**

**changing us as we need to be changed,**

**and sprouting in us a vision of hope for our world.**

**Through Jesus, we ask it. Amen.**

**Opening Hymn:** "Soil of God, You and I"

**MV #174**

**Prayer for Renewal:**

**Creator God, you have set the ways of life within us, and gifted us the language of love .**

**It beats within us. We feel it in our bones.**

**Brother Jesus, you have called us to return to that rhythm of love by your life and your wisdom.**

**And, believe us, we have tried.**

**But, it is hard.**

**To love so freely, to serve so selflessly.**

**To shed the layers of influence that tell us not to love.**

**Not to help. Not to follow. Not to care.**

**But, still we try.**

**Still we seek you.**

**Still we seek the ways of life you have set within us.**

**So, turn us towards Love once again.**

**Awaken in the depths of our being, the rhythm of your Spirit, and tune our ears to hear nothing else.**

**that we may carry forward with renewed confidence and hope.**

**A Time for Silent Reflection and Prayer**

**Words of Assurance**

## Conversation Time for All Ages

**Hymn:**           *“Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery”*           **VU #121**

### Scripture Readings:

*Psalm:*           Psalm 119:9-16

*Gospel:*           John 12:20-33

### Sermon

**Hymn:**           *“He Came Singing Love”*           **VU #359**

### A Time for Offering

#### Invitation

**Offertory Hymn:** *“We are an Offering”*           *(see insert)*

#### Dedication of Our Gifts:

O God of single seeds and fruitful harvests,  
we offer our simple gifts today,  
knowing that even the smallness of our individual gifts  
can grow to make a difference in this world.  
Bless what we share that it might blossom  
into seeds of hope and kindness, justice and generosity,  
love and compassion, in us and others. Amen.

### Sung Invitation to Prayer:

*“Come, Bring Your Burdens to God” (see insert)*

### The Prayers of the People

#### Lord’s Prayer

**Closing Hymn:** *“We Shall Go Out”*           **VU #586**

### Commissioning and Benediction

### Postlude

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## We Are An Offering

We lift our voic - es, we lift our hands, we lift our  
 voic - es, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our  
 lives up to you; we are an of-fer-ing. Lord, use our of-fer-ing.  
 lives, they are yours; we are an  
 All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we  
 give to you, we give to you. We lift our voic-es, we lift our  
 hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an  
 of-fer-ing, we are an of-fer-ing.

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 hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an  
 of-fer-ing, we are an of-fer-ing.

## Come Bring Your Burdens

Come, bring your bur-dens to God, come, bring your bur-dens to God,  
 Wo - za nom-thwa-lo wa-kho; wo - za nom-thwa-lo wa-kho;  
 come, bring your bur-dens to God for Je - sus will nev - er say no.  
 wo - za nom-thwa-lo wa-kho, u - ye-su a-ka - so - za - thi hayi

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