

**St. James United Church**  
~ All are Welcome here ~

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**Order Of Service - February 21, 2021**  
**Lent 1 - A Change Of Heart**

Prelude

Acknowledgement

**We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota nations referred to as Treaty 4 territory. This land is also the homeland of the Metis. We respect and honour these traditional lands. As we acknowledge the harms of the past, we pray that we will faithfully move forward in partnership as Indigenous and non-Indigenous siblings in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.**

*We all have different language for experiencing the holy. Feel free to change the words in hymns and prayers to suit your faith expression.*

Welcome

A Time for Centering: *(Written by F. McNab. Some changes made by D. Robinson)*

Let us listen to the depths of our being ...

**our busyness calling for quietness,  
our emptiness calling for renewed strength,  
our sadness calling for some consolation,  
our joy calling for some celebration.**

May we touch again that Holy Strength and Wisdom  
**that helps us to know the helping resources  
that are given to us.**

*Silence*

Let us centre our selves.

A Time for Reflective Music

Lighting Of The Christ Candle

The light of the Christ candle symbolizes  
strength in hope,  
wideness in good will,  
and love that is all-inclusive and ever-lasting.

Opening Words

The baptism in the wilderness by John was about repentance;  
**Jesus' preaching was, as well.**

We could say that repentance is about a "change of heart" or a "change of life" -  
**a "change" that flows - not from self-defeating guilt -  
but rather from a wild .... imaginative .... embodied .... Love for the world.**

Today I invite you to think of holy Love like a *wild goose*\* ...

that One who is lovingly and persistently nipping at our heels asking us this question:  
**What "change of heart" am I being called to embrace this day - and in all the days ahead?**

(\*Note: *The goose was the ancient Celtic image for the Holy Spirit.*)

Opening Song: "The Lone Wild Bird" (*Voices United #384. verses 1, 3, 5*)

Lenten Prayer (*Excerpts from Wild Geese by Mary Oliver. Adapted by D. Robinson*)

Let us open our hearts in prayer. Let us pray.

**I do not have to be good.**

**I do not have to walk on my knees**

**for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.**

**I only have to let the soft animal of my body**

**love what it loves.**

**Tell me about despair ... yours ... and I will tell you mine.**

*A Time For Silent Reflection*

**Meanwhile the world goes on.**

**Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.**

**Whoever we are, no matter how lonely,**

**the world offers itself to our imagination,**

**calls to us like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --**

**over and over announcing our place**

**in the family of things.**

**Amen.**

A Time For All Ages - Is Change Hard?

A Song For All Ages - "Jesus, Friend of Every Person" (*Voices United #340*)

(Adapted by D. Robinson),

Scripture Reading: Mark 1: 9 - 15

"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee

and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

And just as he was coming up out of the water,

he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my son, the Beloved;

with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan;

and he was with the wild beast; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God,

and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;

repent, and believe in the good news!'"

Reflection - A Change Of Heart

Song of Response: "Holy Spirit, Truth Divine" (*Voices United #368*)

Announcements

We Acknowledge All That Is Given And Received

We Offer Our Thanks:

**For all that is our life we offer thanks.**

**Life is a gift, which we are called to use,**

**so that we might build the storehouse of common good for all humanity.**

**Amen.**

Prayers of Thanksgivings and Concern (Also a time to pray The Lord's Prayer, as you wish)

Song of Going Forth: "Bless Now, O God, the Journey" (*Voices United #633*)

Commissioning:

As you travel through this Lenten season I invite you to reflect on these two questions:

In what way - or ways - do I feel the Holy nipping at my heels like a wild goose?

What "change of heart" are you being called to embrace?

*Pause*

May you listen for how the Holy may be calling you to change.

May you change the world in inspiring ways.

May you love with a wild and imaginative love.

Sung Blessing: More Voices #215 "Peace Be With You" (*Sing Twice*)

Postlude

Please Note:

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\* Some prayers are adapted. Some hymns may be substituted for those in the service.

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A Word of Thanks:

For the words given - and inspiration found - in the following resources:

- 1) "The Poetry of Lent: A Lenten Companion to Mary Oliver's *Devotions*" [saltproject.org](http://saltproject.org)
- 2) Mary Oliver - "Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver". *NW Orchard LLC, 2017*