

Mountain View United Church
85 MacBeath Ave., Moncton NB E1C 6Z3
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Worship Leader
Music Leader
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Rev. Jacob Shaw
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Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

God is good, **all the time...** all the time, **God is good.**

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

We gather to celebrate God's light. We also confess our nature, which often seeks to snuff out God's light. Let us pray, fast, and seek refuge in the Lord our God, as we come to find a deeper appreciation for our Savior.

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us as we pause to reflect on the demands of following the Gospel. You summon us to stand firm against temptation, to turn from evil, and to pursue lives marked by justice and mercy. In humility, we

confess how often we falter and how deeply we groan under the weight of this calling. Too many times we drift from Your path, only to grieve the consequences later.

So today, as we step toward the cross and enter this holy season that leads to Easter, we intentionally quiet our hearts to listen for Your voice. We come ready to confront the demands of faithful discipleship and to honor the costly sacrifice of Your Son—Jesus, who bore the cross to break the chains of sin, guilt, and brokenness that held us captive.

Lord, we resolve not to squander Your extravagant love, but to let it overflow in our words, our choices, and our daily reflection. Stay near to us now and walk with us through every step of this Lenten journey. Amen.

Hymn: Be Thou My Vision VU 642 v. 1-3

- 1 Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart; naught be all else to me save that thou art, thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife; I ever with thee, and thou in my life; thou loving parent,

thy child may I be, thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

- 3 Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight be thou my dignity, thou my delight, thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower; raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

Scripture 1: Isaiah 58: 1-3a read by Debbie Ellison

“Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins. For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’

Reflection 1

Hymn: O God How We Have Wandered VU 112

- 1 O God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face; in foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace. But how, in exile dwelling, we

turn with fear and shame, as distant but compelling, you call us each by name.

- 2 And now at length discerning the evil that we do, by faith we are returning with hope and trust in you. In haste you come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring, in gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
- 3 O God of all the living, both banished and restored, compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope assured. Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease. Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.

Scripture 2: Isaiah 58:3b-5

read by Rev. Jacob Shaw

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Reflection 2

Hymn: O Jesus, I Have Promised

VU 120

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; remain for ever near me, my Saviour and my friend: I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side, nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.
- 2 O let me feel you near me: the world is ever near; I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear; my foes are ever near me, around me and within; but, Jesus, then draw nearer and shield my soul from sin.
- 3 O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still, above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will; O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control; now speak, and make me listen, O guardian of my soul.
- 4 O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you, that where you are in glory your servant shall be too. And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; O give me grace to follow, my Saviour and my friend.

Scripture 3: Isaiah 58: 6-9a read by Debbie Ellison

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

Reflection 3

Hymn Amazing Grace

VU 266

- 1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

- 3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me, this word my hope secures; God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

Scripture 4: Isaiah 58:9b-12

read by Rev. Jacob Shaw

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

Reflection 4

Prayer of Confession

Lord of Heaven, we come before You today, confessing that we fall short of Your glory. We seek You as our loving Father, our rock and refuge, standing in awe of Your power, wisdom, and majesty.

We long to follow Your will and embrace the call to repentance. Help us grieve the sins we have committed—against You, Your creation, and one another—both those we recognize and those hidden from us. Forgive our wicked thoughts, words, and deeds.

Kindle in us a steady trust in Your grace, a safe haven for our hearts. Open our eyes to our failings so we may turn from sin and the dust-and-ashes nature of our frailty, and instead live righteous, godly lives.

In Your mercy, pour out Your love as we walk this path of faith.

Moment of Silence

Lord, we thank You for Your boundless mercy and grace. May Your Spirit remain with us always. Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Be Thou My Vision

VU 642 v. 4-5

- 4 Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always; thou and thou only, the first in my heart, great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 Great God of heaven, after victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Benediction

With our hearts calling out to God, we embark on our Lenten journey, with an appreciation that God makes room for the wicked to return to him, to reconcile and make new, to be freed from the fate of Dust and Ash. For those would wish to stay in reflective prayer for a while, you are welcome too, otherwise, may the Spirit of the Lord be with, go in peace.

Postlude

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