

March 16, 2025
Lent Two
PIE Day Worship

The people of Gower Street United Church are committed to doing right by Jesus' teachings: loving, serving, giving generously in our local, regional, and global communities. We envision a vibrant and evolving community where tradition is honoured, change is embraced, and injustice is challenged.

We are dedicated to being welcoming and affirming, engaging participation of all, including people of any age, colour, race, ethnicity, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, marital status, family composition, and social or economic circumstances.



We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we live, work and worship as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has been lost forever and can never be recovered. We also acknowledge the island of Kaimuki (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut. We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. As we open our hearts and minds to the past, we commit ourselves to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

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Bold indicates unison.
Rise in body and spirit as you prefer.
The projected text in white is a communal response.

Today's bulletin is dedicated in loving memory of dear son and brother
Michael R. Power
(March 14, 1970 – August 20, 1986)
Forever in our hearts from Mom, Keith & Brenda.

THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

The Life and Work of Gower

Voluntary: Aria Peeters

We sing: VU 147 What Wondrous Love Is This
Wondrous Love

Words of Welcome:

No matter who you are, where you come from, how you come to be here, what you believe or what you are questioning, you are welcome in fullness.

Lighting of the Rainbow Candle: Meghan, Molly and Norah

We have more in common than in difference.

This light reminds us of our unity in faith.

It is a call to reconciliation and healing.

A rainbow beacon of a different way of being in the world.

One that unifies rather than divides; respects differences and embraces grace.

May this light remind us that we are called to embody the full queerness of the Holy in the world.

Gathering Words:

Come to this place where all are welcome.

We come regardless of who we are and what we have done or not done.

In this place, as in all places where God is present, healing and forgiveness are ours simply by asking.

Desiring these gifts and ready to accept them, we prepare ourselves for worship.

Gathering Prayer:

Holy One, we gather in this place reflecting on our lives as they are interwoven with your life. We long for peace and rest. Yet we know that in order to find that peace, sometimes we have to lament and name our disappointments and hurts, just as you did. Help us to be freed from our fear and come to you with our sadness as well as with our joy, trusting that you will receive us, heal us, and set us free. Amen.

Second Candle of Lent: Tracy Sullivan

On the second Sunday of Advent, we lit a candle to remind us that we are called to be a people of peace. We rest in the glow of that candle now.

(a moment of silence)

As we reflect upon the wars and conflicts that are raging in many parts of our world today, we acknowledge how we have fallen short of our commitment to seek non-violent solutions to our problems with one another as neighbours in community. We grieve our inability to get along with each other in lasting ways, as we seek refuge in tools and ways that will only cause more harm to those who are already hurting.

As we gaze upon this candle representing peace, we feel as if we are still so far away from the harmony and right relationship we know we are capable of, it is hard to believe that peace is still possible. As the shadows of Lent come closer, we extinguish our candle of peace, just for today, as we seek to fully and faithfully make the dream of peace a reality for all and for all time.

(Candle is Extinguished)

Choral Response: Drop, Drop Slow Tears

Gibbons



Exploring Lent

We sing: MV 145 Draw the Circle Wide

Grounding in God's Limitless Love:

Jill Handrigan

The church hasn't been a safe place, let alone a safer place, for 2SLGBTQAI+ peoples. Our sacred story has been weaponized and used to limit participation, deny identity, justify misplaced legislation, vilify, criminalize, and traumatize.

It's a truth we must embrace, a history we must own.

But there is another way—a deeper way, an intersectional way.

Can you hear it? **(whisper) Love.**

Can you see it? **(louder) Love.**

Can you taste it, feel it, touch it? **(loudest) Love!**

Love is God's boundless potential in human form. It creates safer spaces, embraces diversity, affirms everyone, publicly proclaims each person's humanity, and explicitly states that you, yes, you are exactly as God wants you to be—created in their image.

LISTENING TO THE STORY

Prayer for Illumination:

Tracy Sullivan

Blessed God, as we receive these words of scripture, open our hearts and spirits so we might be willingly shaped for your purposes, by the power of your living Word. Amen.

A reading from Scripture: Genesis 15: 1-12, 17-18

God seals the covenant with Abram and Sarai.

A reading from the Gospel: Luke 13: 31-35

Jesus Cries over Jerusalem as a hen over her chicks.

Response: VU 118 Wonder and Stare

Iona Community

Sung twice, first by the choir, then by all.

Anthem: Pie Jesu (Requiem)

Faure

Soloist: Megan Barnes

Meditation

We sing: MV 179 Sisters Let Us Walk Together

COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND SHARING GOD'S LOVE THROUGH OUR MINISTRY

You can offer your financial gifts to Gower Street United Church in many ways.

As you enter/leave the sanctuary, there are offering plates where you may lay your offerings. You can also continue to drop off offerings in the secure mailbox outside the church office, or you can donate via E-

Transfer, using the email address gsuc@nl.rogers.com. You can also scan the QR code on your mobile device to be brought directly to our website page.

Gathering our Gifts:

We now come to a moment of generosity and sharing. In our worship, we not only offer our prayers and praises but also our tangible gifts as a sign of our commitment and gratitude. Each contribution, no matter the size, is an important part of the work we do together as a community of faith.

As we prepare our hearts to give, let us remember that our offerings are not just financial. We are invited to give of our time, our talents, and our resources. Whether it is through volunteering, sharing our skills, or contributing financially, each act of giving is a reflection of God's generosity towards us. In giving, we participate in the work of God in the world. Our gifts support the ministries of our church, aid those in need worldwide through the Mission and Service Fund, and help spread the message of God's inclusive love. As we give, let us do so cheerfully and with a spirit of abundance, trusting that what we offer will be multiplied in its impact.

We sing: VU 293 We Praise You, Creator (v.1) Lyons

Offering Prayer:

Holy One, Holy Three, you who created us in their image, we thank you for the rainbow expression of gifts embodied in your beloved ones. Bless these gifts that were given yesterday and today and will be given tomorrow. Take our time, our talents, our passion, and our resources and use them to create a world where the public square is made for everyone and a world where hate, bigotry, and the phobias of othering are only something read about in history books so that we might be your rainbow people. Amen.

Prayers for the World:

We pray for the Church—your Church, O God. We confess that it has not always been a place of welcome and affirmation for people who are part of the queer community. Too often, your beloved children have been excluded, silenced, and harmed. We lament this history, and we seek a more faithful way forward.

God of Love, guide us to be public, intentional, and explicit.

We pray for the lives lost too soon— Those taken by hate, violence, and fear of difference. We remember especially our trans-siblings who face disproportionate violence each year. May their memory be a call to justice.

God of Love, guide us to be public, intentional, and explicit.

We pray for all who continue to carry the trauma of being "othered."

Those who have been harmed in body, mind, or spirit because of their identity or expression. May healing come. May safety be found. May love be known.

God of Love, guide us to be public, intentional, and explicit.

We give thanks for the leaders, allies, and advocates— Those who have fought for equal rights, for visibility, and for change. Those who continue to speak up for justice in workplaces, schools, churches, and governments. Strengthen their voices. Sustain their work.

God of Love, guide us to be public, intentional, and explicit.

We pray for unity—not uniformity, but a unity that celebrates difference. A unity that builds bridges and makes room at the table for all. May our communities be places where the radical love of Christ is lived out in every colour of the rainbow.

God of Love, guide us to be public, intentional, and explicit.

We pray for grace—for ourselves and one another. For the times we falter: when we misuse names or

pronouns, when we make assumptions, when we fall short. May we meet those moments with honesty, humility, and a willingness to grow. Lead us toward the deeper love that shows us The Way.

God of Love, guide us to be public, intentional, and explicit.

We now pause to lift up our personal prayers for people, places, and situations in need of your justice, compassion, and peace...

(pause for silent or spoken prayers)

Rainbow God, you call each of us beloved—each of us queerfully and wonderfully made. Take these prayers and turn them into tangible expressions of your love.

God of Love, guide us to be public, intentional, and explicit.

PIE Day Prayer of Jesus:

Let us pray, with hearts open to all, in the spirit of divine love and acceptance:

Our Parent in Heaven, whose love knows no bounds,

Your name is holy, held in the highest regard.

May Your realm of love, acceptance, and justice come,

May Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,

Guiding us to honour each other's dignity and worth.

Give us today our daily bread, the sustenance we need,

And forgive us our prejudices as we forgive those who are prejudiced against us,

Lead us away from judgement, and deliver us from the hands of hatred.

For Yours is the realm of unconditional love, the power to change hearts,

And the glory of diversity in unity, now and forever.

May all of us, created beautifully and wonderfully in Your image,

Live and love in the spirit of Your Son, who taught us to pray,

Embracing each other, as You embrace us all. Amen.

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

We sing: VU 586 We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection

Londonderry Air

We go out into the world:

Go into the world

As The Holy's beloved rainbow people.

Go knowing that who you are

Is an expression of the divine

And it need not be hidden under a jar or in a closet.

Go to be the church with a radical love

That builds up the body of Christ

And affirms our belovedness in public, intentional, and explicit ways. As we leave this time of worship

May you be blessed and know that you are loved by our co-creative God. May you be blessed and know that you are lovable in the way of Jesus. May you be blessed and know that you are lovely because the Spirit is in you. You are blessed to be a blessing. Never forget that you belong to God's radically inclusive and affirming family.

We sing: Soli Deo Gloria

Postlude: Fugue in g minor BWV 578

J S Bach

Today's Worship was inspired by Gathering, Lent/Easter 2025, Year C and National Affirming Pie Day resources.

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