

March 22, 2026

**Lent Five
PIE DAY**

(Public, Intentional, Explicit; the way we strive to be as a community in supporting our 2SLGBTQ+ families, neighbours, and friends.)

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.

In memory of our grandmother **Muriel Vardy** on the 3rd anniversary of her passing. Muriel was a long-time member of Gower. Forever in our hearts, Russell, Sean & Nicole Vardy & their mom Brenda Martin

THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

The Life and Work of Gower

Voluntary:

Aria Peeters

We sing: MV 1 Let us Build a House

Two Oakes

Words of Welcome:

In Jesus' name, welcome!

First-time participant or one who's been here many days;
child or elder or somewhere in-between;
stewards, caretakers, disciples of Jesus, children of God—
neighbors all, loved and loving.
Welcome. Welcome in Jesus' name!

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.

Time of Silence

Lighting of the Rainbow Candle:

Rev. Karen

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 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.

The Call to Light:

Angeline Anstey

It's Sunday morning.

Last week, with all its demands, is over.

The coming week, with yet another round of challenges and demands, is not quite here.

I invite you to close your eyes and be in the moment.

No matter where we are in our thoughts and feelings—relieved about what we have accomplished, anxious about what's left undone, concerned about people or projects—no matter where we are in our journey this day—

I encourage you to set all that aside and consider where you are right now. Whatever is true for you right now, in this moment, whether it be joy or sadness, gratitude or anxiety, let it come forward.

When it is fully present, then listen . . . for God is present in these moments, too. God meets you where you are and calls you forward, moment by moment, guiding you slowly but surely toward transformation.

(Silent time)

As we extinguish this light, **we acknowledge the darkness and pain caused by the lack of basic needs—lack of food, of shelter, of education, of healthcare, of love.**

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray:

Loving God, we thank you that you are with us, and that we may call upon you no matter where we are, or what we are feeling. Keep us mindful of your presence and trusting in your promise—that you are working with us in the moment-by-moment unfolding of our lives. Amen.

Choral Response: VU 948 O God, hear my prayer

Taizé

Grounding in God's Limitless Love:

Rev. Karen

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.

A Moment for Affirm

Katie Doyle

What is Affirm? (video)

(Children are to move to Gower Learners with Rev. Karen)

LISTENING TO THE STORY

A reading from the Gospel: John 9:1-41

Jesus heals the man born blind.

Response: VU 956 Your word is a lamp

Daley

Anthem: Ave Verum Corpus

Mozart

Meditation

We sing: VU 112 O God, How We Have Wandered

Lancashire

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 537 Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands, v.2
Kilmarnock

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 Jesus 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 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.

Silence

The Prayer of Jesus

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

We sing: VU 563 Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore
Pescador de Hombres

We go out into the world:

As we travel this Lenten journey,

we know that God leads and guides us.

As we travel this Lenten journey,

we notice the stories of Jesus making choices for life and ministry.

As we travel this Lenten journey,

we dream and work with the Spirit for a world where peace and harmony are restored. We leave this place in peace, going to share the love of God. Amen.

We sing: MV 214 May God's Sheltering Wings

Postlude: Fuge in C Bux WV 174

Buxtehude

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

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Minister: The Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald

Youth & Family Minister: The Rev. Rebecca Pike-Winter

Interim Youth & Family Minister: The Rev. Karen Thorne

Minister Emeritus: The Very Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy

Organist & Music Ministry: R. Carl Goulding

Custodian: David Noseworthy

Board Chair: Jonathan Stevenson

Journey to The Cross Lenten Services

**Palm Sunday, March 29 at 10:30 a.m.
Gower United with the Gower Community Band**

Holy Week Services

**Monday March 30th, 7:30pm
First United, Mount Pearl**

**Tuesday March 31st, 7:30Pm
Memorial United, Pouch Cove**

**Wednesday, April 1 at 7:30 pm.
Memorial United, Portugal Cove-St. Phillip's**

**Maundy Thursday, April 2 at 7:30 p.m.
Cowan Heights United**

**Good Friday, April 3 at 12 noon
Wesley United**

**Easter Eve Vigil, April 4 at 7:30 p.m.
St. James United**

**Easter Sunday, April 5 at Gower
Holy Communion at 9:15 a.m.
Coffee and Conversation in the Lecture Hall, immediately following
Communion
Easter Sunday Celebration at 11:00 a.m.**