

PARKMINSTER UNITED CHURCH

Sunday, March 26, 2017



The Shadowland of Lent

Reflection: "Unbound"

Rev. Meg Grieve

spiritually, as a culture, and as a church. In all these contexts, we are seeking wholeness and balance in the midst of the shadows of fear and pain.

One of the shadows we live with is the shadow that falls over our relationship with First People. With gratitude and respect, we recognize the Six Nations tribes on whose traditional land we make our spiritual home. We acknowledge, with regret, that this history has not always been respectful. We commit to just relationship in the present.

All: Seeking true community, we welcome all who have no church home, need strength, and are seeking deep meaning. Welcome to those who have doubts or who do not believe. Welcome to those whose faith is sure, and to those who believe, but who are asking large questions.

One: Welcome to visitors and to familiar friends. Welcome to grandparents, to mothers, fathers, youth and children, couples, and single people.

All: Welcome to people of all colours, gender identities, abilities, and sexual orientations.

One: Welcome to each who is searching for meaning, who is seeking an understanding of community and what it means to accompany one another.

All: As we come together as church, we turn to one another with gratitude and pray that we will be strong together, faithful together, and loving together. We seek blessing as we face the greatest unknown, and with the hope of spring, we share the confidence that no matter how hidden we are in the shadow, love is stronger than death.

Joys, Concerns, and Greeting One Another

Today, as we continue our Lenten journey, we will pass peace to one another. Please remain seated. Those sitting on the aisle will receive the blessing of peace by holding their hands as if in prayer. The one passing the peace will place his/her hands around the “prayer” hands and say, “the blessing of peace be to you.” The person who has received the blessing will turn to the person sitting next in the pew, hold his/her hands and offer the same words of blessing. In this way, the peace will travel down each row and touch each of our spirits.

★ Children’s Song: “Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope” 🎵 MV #33

Story Time

Following the story time, the children/youth will leave for their own learning time. Learn lots!

For babies and toddlers, there is the Family Worship Space at the back of the sanctuary. Each week, there will be an adult present so that the children can play and be cared for and parents can worship. Parents are free to come and go from that space, according to the needs of their children.

Opening Our Hearts

Focus on Annette Dekker’s photograph of “Shadow” at the front of the church. What do you see?

We humans love deeply. We also sorrow deeply.

Think of a time when you have experienced grief. Stay with that sorrow for a while. What helped you when you were in the depths? Who came to you? Where did you find holy energy in your sorrowing? Give thanks.

Prayer by Meg

★ Hymn: (*sung 3x*) “Take, O Take Me as I Am” 🎵 MV #85

**Take, O Take me as I am;
 Summon out what I shall be;
 Set your seal upon my heart and live in me.**

Pondering the Biggest Question

Ministry of Music “Help Us, Great Spirit”

*by Ruth Watson Henderson
 (Percussion: John Watson)*

Scripture: John 11: 17-27, 43-44 (NT, pg.105)

About Scripture

Today we read the story of the raising of Jesus’ friend, Lazarus. The shadow of death falls over Lazarus’ sisters, Mary and Martha, and over their community in Bethany. The shadow falls over Jesus as well, for he shared a deep friendship with Lazarus, and he wept at the loss of his friend.

The sisters call for Jesus when their brother dies. As Jesus approaches Bethany, he is met by their deep sorrow and pain. The disciples remind Jesus that he is dangerously close to Jerusalem where his enemies are agitating against him. In their estimation, the prudent thing would be to lie low, not to engage in a spectacular miracle that would draw attention.

Jesus does not fade into Bethany’s background. He feels his sorrow and does not hide it. Then, he orders the stone covering the mouth of Lazarus’ grave rolled back. Once the grave is open, Jesus calls Lazarus from death to life. As Lazarus stumbles out of his burial cave covered in grave cloths, Jesus asks the witnesses to unbind him and set him free.

Of course we who know the story hear the echoes of Good Friday and Easter morning. We know that the editors of John's gospel are readying us for the spiritual journey that lies ahead of us.

The raising of Lazarus also tells us that resurrection is not just for Jesus. It is for each and every one of us who has loved and lost, who has sorrowed the death of a relationship, who has lost capacity to illness or age, or who has lost him/herself to fear or a sense of personal inadequacy. Life brings an array of "little" deaths that are remarkably painful. We hide the pain of these deaths in our shadow. Nobody likes to hurt, so we bury our sorrow and fear as far away from our conscious minds as we can.

In the short term, parking fear and regret and shame in our shadow gives us relief. In the long term, not dealing with our anxious hurting selves shuts us down. In our weak moments what is hidden comes roaring into the everyday, daring us to bring the shadow to the light. We deny our truth at our own peril.

Today we can hear Jesus call us out of shadow into the sun. Today we hear him say to us, "You are unbound and set free." There is resurrection possible for the little losses. Easter is every day.

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★ Hymn: "What Calls Me from the Death" 🎵 MV #93

Living the Biggest Question

Offertory: "Earthscape" *by David Marlatt*
(Chaplain's Brass accompanied by Neil Murray)

Dedication: "Christ Has No Body Now But Yours" 🎵 MV #171, v.4

Offering Prayer, said by **all**:

We are grateful that love is stronger than death. We are grateful; that holy energy opens us to possibility and hope. We are grateful that resurrection shows up in our everyday lives and offers us the chance to begin again, a new identity. We show our gratitude with our offering of compassion and resources. With this offering, we say thanks.

Prayers for the Unbound

★ Hymn: “In the Quiet Curve of Evening” 🎵 VU #278

★ Commissioning and Blessing

★ Sung Benediction

**Peace I leave.
My peace I give you,
not the peace the world can offer.
In each storm, in each confusion, I’ll be with you.**

Postlude – Chaplain’s Brass

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Thank you to everyone who has offered their gift of time to volunteer in various ways this Sunday:

Ushers: Lloyd Hart; Ron & Sue Usaty, Colleen & Dana
Greeters:..... David & Carol Bertrand, Sylvia, Vivian & Russell
Lay Reader: Cobie Love
Candle Lighters: Sylvia & Vivian Bertrand
Art: Annette Dekker
Counters:..... John & Susan Bain
Musicians: Chaplain’s Brass; John Watson; Neil Murray
Chancel Arrangements: Annette Dekker
Coffee Hour: Ankeman’s Reception
Coffee Hour Dessert: Membership & Pastoral Care Committee

The Ministry of Parkminster:	All of us
Ministry of Word & Sacrament (Interim):	Rev. Meg Grieve (ext. 23)
Ministry of Pastoral Care (Interim):	Rev. Elaine Beattie (ext. 22)
Ministry of Christian Education:	Kelly Moores (ext. 24)
Music Director:	Neil Murray (ext. 25)
Office Administrator:	Melanie Chisholm (ext. 21)
Custodian:	Allen Switzer (ext. 26)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Ankenman Farewell Reception following worship: A special farewell for Wayne and Shirley as they prepare to move to British Columbia. Please come to the gym after the service for cake, coffee, and an opportunity to visit and reminisce.

A MESSAGE FROM STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Parkminster has much to be grateful for! As we approach Easter please consider, if you are able, a donation over and above your regular offering. This may be designated for a variety of initiatives as indicated on the envelopes found in the pews. For more information, please open the attachment in the weekly "What's Up" email or see the article in the March 2017 Newsletter. Thank you for your support of our many wonderful programs!

PASTORAL CARE: Rev. Meg & Rev. Elaine: Elaine can be reached at **519-504-0935 (note tel # change)** or by email at elainebeattie8@hotmail.com. Meg can be reached at the church 519-885-0935 ext. 23 or by email at rev.meg.parkminster@gmail.com

This week let us pray for:

World Council of Churches Prayer Cycle:

Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia

&

Hamilton Conference Prayer Cycle:

Parkminster United Church