



Northlea United Church

In the community. For the community.

125 Brentcliffe Road, Toronto, ON, M4G 3Y7

www.northleaunited.ca ~ 416-425-5252



"God is Spirit"

John 4:24

March 12, 2023
Third Sunday in Lent

At Northlea United Church,
we encourage one another as we:
Love God ~ Connect with others
Nurture the spirit ~ Serve the world

Thank you for joining us for service today whether in-person or online. If there is anything we can do to improve your experience, please let us know by calling the church office at 416 425 5252 or emailing us at office@northleaunited.ca. There are many ways to access online videos whether live streamed or pre-recorded. The Northlea United Facebook page or our website will have links to our services:

Facebook:

Simply sign on to Facebook and search for the Northlea United page. You will find links there.

www.northleaunited.ca:

Visit our website. Links will be posted to our homepage for easy access.

Thank you for helping with today's service:

Rev. Lee-Ann Ahlstrom - Presiding
David Jafelice - Music Director & Music Video Production
Kayla Ruiz, Soprano & Karen Davidson, Alto
Joshua Clemenger, Tenor & Tristan Zaba, Bass
Jo Dullard - Video Production, Donna Rutz - Social Media Support
Ray Murrill - Reader

Minister: Rev. Lee-Ann Ahlstrom lee-ann@northleaunited.ca

Music Director: David Jafelice david@northleaunited.ca

Office Administrator: Tricia Reid office@northleaunited.ca

Facility Manager: Robert Pringle building@northleaunited.ca

Congregational & Community Outreach Coordinator: Jo Dullard jo@northleaunited.ca

Consider financially supporting Northlea United through Canada Helps (scan QR code) or by contacting the office to receive a Pre-Authorized Remittance form to set up automatic monthly donations or by mailing in your donation.



Please contact the church office if you would like more information

416 425 5252 or office@northleaunited.ca

** Unless otherwise indicated: Prayers (various) are taken from “The United Church of Canada - Gathering - resources for worship planners” Lent Easter – 2023 Year A Worship, Music, and Spirituality ISSN-0823-1869 1.9M 10/22 220004 CH11183

Northlea United Church
March 12, 2023

Prelude: Sicut Cervus

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525-1594)
Psalm 42:1 *As the deer longs for running streams,
my soul longs for you, O God.*

Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that we worship on traditional land entrusted to us but belonging to the Creator. We are called to respect the history, spirituality, and culture of the many First Nations, who came to this place long before us, and our responsibility for the treaty territory wherein our church resides. May we not take the land, its first people, and all its many gifts for granted.

Welcome

Joys and Concerns

Call to Worship:

Lent is not a time for being miserable,
but for taking stock and resetting our aims for following Christ.

**Loving God, in you we trust,
let us never fool ourselves.**

Lent is an opportunity for healthy repentance-
repentance for our indifference in face of the permeating evil of the world,
repentance for personal sins which we have glossed over as “mere foibles.”

**According to your loving kindness,
remember me, God of goodness and saving grace.**

Lent is a time for joy; the exhilaration that comes-
from defying temptations,
from turning our face to the light that shines
on the narrow path of Christ Jesus,
from walking into adverse winds and enjoying small victories day by day.

**Make me to know your ways, O God, teach me your paths,
for you are the God of my salvation and my true happiness.**

— written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on Bruce Prewer’s Homepage. <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>

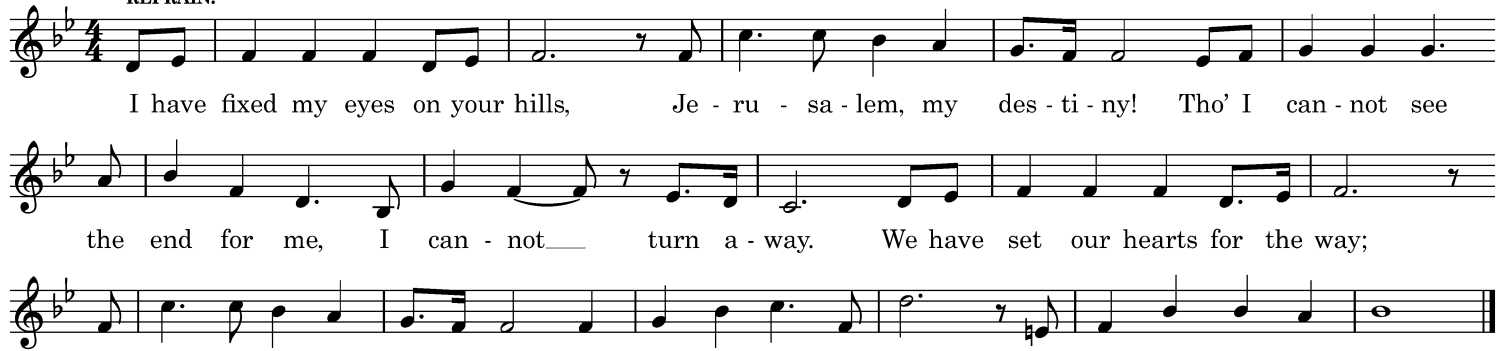
Rory Cooney is the author of the hymn we are about to sing. In a blog post he writes that in his view the community birthed at Pentecost, the church, is the new Jerusalem. He says, “We cannot see our destiny, but we cannot turn away . . . becoming part of the Jerusalem community is becoming one’s truest self, is becoming conscious of the Spirit that lives in everyone ...”

For those of us that continue to journey together as the church, what keeps us from turning away? Where does the call to gather here, to follow Jesus, to be part of this community, come from in each one of us? What prevents us from turning away?

Opening Hymn: Jerusalem My Destiny

Words and Music by Rory Cooney

REFRAIN:



I have fixed my eyes on your hills, Je - ru - sa - lem, my des - ti - ny! Tho' I can - not see
the end for me, I can - not turn a - way. We have set our hearts for the way;
this jour - ney is our des - ti - ny. Let no - one walk a - lone. The jour - ney makes us one.

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Lighting of the Christ Candle:

In our walking together, we share in lighting the way of Christ. We engage in a relationship with Christ and one another in the process of discovering our truest selves. May the journey together lead us to become conscious of the Spirit that lives in everyone.

~ light the candle~

The light of Christ.
Thanks be to God

The Gift of Peace

(Take a moment to turn and greet the gathered community with a smile and a bow of greeting)

Opening Prayer:

Wellspring of eternal life, we come to you this day having drunk deeply the waters of anxiety, mistrust and despair. Bring to us your living water. Quench our thirsting souls.

God of living waters, we confess that we have often turned from you and wandered in our own wildernesses of fear and doubt. Our thirst mounts daily, seeking to be quenched by your redeeming love. Yet, when that love is offered to us, we again turn away, unable to truly believe that you would actually heal and love us. We have behaved in very unloving ways. We have chosen to ignore those in need or to deal only passively with them. Our hearts are not placed in service to others, but rather in self-serving motives. Heal us, merciful God. Wash us again in the living water. Help us be faithful servants. Amen

Words of Assurance:

The waters of mercy and healing are poured over you. God is loving and faithful to those who come to God. Come, seek the loving presence and be healed. AMEN.

~ Listening ~

Prayer for Illumination:

Holy Spirit, stir us with your word,
as we listen for inspiration in your sacred story.
Amen

Scripture: John 4:5-42

Ray Murrill

In this reading we hear God's voice,
The Spirit is still speaking, thanks be to God.

Reflection: Spiritual Wellness

~ Responding ~

Anthem: Like A Healing Stream

by Bruce Harding
arr. by Michael Mulrooney,
(director of Music at Grace United Church, Burlington)

Offering our Gifts: How shall we respond?

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us away from temptation and deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Led By the Spirit

Bob Hurd



1. Led_ by the Spir - it of our God, we_ go to fast_ and pray
2. Led_ by the Spir - it, we con - front temp - ta - tion face to face,
3. Led_ by the Spir - it, now draw near the_ wa - ters of_ re - birth
4. Led_ by the Spir - it, now sing praise to_ God the Trin - i - ty:



With Christ in - to the wil - der - ness; we_ join his pas - chal way.
And know full well we must re - ply on_ God's re - deem - ing grace.
With hearts that long to wor - ship God in_ spir - it and_ in truth.
The_ Source of Life, the Liv - ing Word made flesh to set_ us free,



“Rend not your gar - ments, rend your hearts. Turn back your lives to me.”
On_ bread a - lone_ we can - not live, but_ nour - ished by the Word.
“Who - ev - er drinks the drink I give shall ne - ver_ thirst a - gain.”
The Spir - it blow - ing where it will to_ make us_ friends of God:



Thus says our kind and gra - cious God, whose reign is lib - er - ty.
We_ seek the will of_ God to do: this is our drink and food.
Thus says the Lord who died for us, our_ Sav - ior, kin_ and friend.
This mys - t'ry far_ be - yond our reach, yet_ near in heal - ing love.

based on Joel 2:12–13; Matthew 4:1–4; Mark 1:12–15; John 4:5–42

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Sending Forth:

May the grace of Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

Sung Amen:

Christopher Walker



A - - - men, a - - - - - men.

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About *Jerusalem, My Destiny* by hymn writer Rory Cooney

<http://rorycooney.blogspot.com/2013/02/songstories-2-jerusalem-my-destiny-1989.html>

“*Jerusalem, My Destiny*” was inspired by the confluence of several things that roiled around in my imagination. First, there is the centrality of Jerusalem in the imagination of the author of Luke, how the narrative of his gospel builds toward Jerusalem, site of the passion narrative, the resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, all of which take place in the city. From there, the narrative of Acts explodes out of the city of Jerusalem and goes out across the whole Mediterranean world. Second, there is the beautiful line that follows the transfiguration story in the gospel of St. Luke, 9:51.

When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem...

The NRSV says Jesus “set his face” to go to Jerusalem . . . This is the part that caught me, that after the transfiguration, he knew that he could not wander in Galilee anymore, but had to go to Jerusalem, the city of his destiny. This is not to say that I think that Jesus had any clear idea that his death was immanent; I simply feel that he knew that he had to confront the people and structures who were at the source of interpretation of the law and prophets and put his reading of the scriptures in competition with theirs. It didn't take a prophet to know that the journey and confrontation might be dangerous.

I think of Jerusalem as the city, yes, and so many people have told me that they sang my song when they went on tours to the Holy Land as they approached Jerusalem! How cool is that? I’ve never been there myself, but the thought of that fills me with joy and gratitude. I also think of Jerusalem as the “new Jerusalem,” God’s city that is beyond our imagining but nevertheless our destiny. Just as importantly in my view, though, Jerusalem is us, Jerusalem the “city of peace,” is the Church, is Christ, the community of Pentecost. We cannot see our destiny, but we cannot turn away. For apprentice Christians and us “old timers” alike, the journey to Christ is the destiny, because Christ is here among us, revealing self to us in our daily lives, in strangers, in the poor, in sacraments, in nature everywhere we look. So we sing “let no one walk alone,” because becoming part of the Jerusalem community is becoming one’s truest self, is becoming conscious of the Spirit that lives in everyone because of creation, and made visible and conscious in our baptism.

Thanks to everyone who ever sang this song, in Jerusalem of the Holy Land or in the Jerusalem of your parish community.”

Reading Next Week

From *The Gathering*

1 Samuel 16:1-13; 1 Samuel 18:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

To find out what's happening at Northlea United, visit northleaunited.ca.