



LAKE OF BAYS PASTORAL CHARGE

Faith communities of
Pioneer Memorial in Hillside,
Stewart Memorial in Dwight
Knox United in Dorset.

Shared Winter services in Pioneer Hall, 10:30 a.m.

**March 17, 2024
Fifth Sunday of Lent**

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04/05/2024

WE GATHER

**Welcome, Life and Work of the Church
Lighting of the Christ Candle
Acknowledgement of the Land and Water**

Introit: O God We Call VU#411

**O God we call
O God we call
From deep inside we yearn
From deep inside we yearn
From deep inside we yearn for you.**

Call to Worship

Great Spirit, you lead us with Christ into the wilderness
of life beyond our understanding or control,

With Christ, we gather and journey together.

When rules and traditions tempt us to resist change
because transformation seems dangerous and unfamiliar,

Wth Christ, we welcome this new day, trusting that Your Spirit leads us. Amen

Hymn.: Will You Come and Follow Me VU#567

- 1 Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?
- 2 Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?
- 3 Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?
- 4 Will you love the 'you' you hide

if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

5 Christ, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

Prayer of Approach (unison)

For everything that emerges from Earth
thanks be to you, O God,
Holy Root of being
Sacred Sap that rises
Full-bodied Fragrance of Earth's unfolding form.
May we know that we are of You
may we know that we are in You
may we know that we are one with You
together one.
Guide us as nations to what is deepest
open us as peoples to what is first
lead us as a world to what is dearest
that we may know the holiness of wholeness
that we may learn the strength of humility
that together we may live close to Earth
and grow wise in the ground of Christ

WE LISTEN

Scripture reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
Thanks be to God

Hymn: Deep in Our Hearts MV#154

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,
telling Creation that we are one.

Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;
Deep in our hearts there is a common goal;
Deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,
justice and peace in harmony.

Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;
Deep in our hearts there is a common theme;
Deep in our hearts there is a common current,
flowing to freedom like a stream.

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,
telling Creation that we are one.

Sermon: St. Patrick's Gift to the World

An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality

The Celtic tradition has been practiced in Europe since at least the 4th century AD. It has found its deepest and most continuous expression in regions we recognize as Gaelic*—Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

John Philip has identified two major features of the Celtic spiritual tradition that distinguish it from what has been commonly called a 'Mediterranean tradition'. The first, in his words, "is marked by the belief that what is deepest in us is the image of God." All living beings have that common core, so it could as well be said that deepest of all in our natures we are 'of God.' And implicit in that fact is the second feature, that creation itself is essentially good. "Not only is creation viewed as a blessing, it is regarded in essence as an expression of God," to be cherished and nourished.

If, then, Celtic belief and experience are grounded in an assumption that the universe emerges from the womb of the Eternal, matter is no neutral substance, but (again in John Philip's words) "a holy and living energy born from the hidden depths of God... It is a body with one Heartbeat. Christ comes to lead us back into the dance. In him we hear the beat that comes from the heart of all things..." The well-being for which I yearn will come only in relationship to my, your and our well-being and the well-being of all things. Our salvation will come through and with one another, because "it is the ancient Wholeness of which we are a part."

The Christian tradition of Celtic life, "inspired by John, remembered him as the beloved disciple who leaned against Jesus at the Last Supper. He had become an image of the practice of listening for the heartbeat of God. This spirituality lent itself to listening for God at the heart of life... As such, it was part of an ancient

stream of contemplative spirituality stretching back to St. John the Evangelist and even to the Wisdom tradition of the Old Testament. It was [and remains] a spirituality characterized by a listening within all things for the life of God.” As Pelagius, one of Celtic Christianity’s early 4th century exemplars, wrote, “It is not believing in Christ that matters; it is becoming like him.”

The implications of such striving are manifold. For example, loving our neighbor as ourselves means loving not only our human neighbor but all the life forms that surround us. Becoming like a child is “recovering the inner faculties we were born with and using them to glimpse the presence of spirit in created matter.” Or again here is Newell on Gaelic perspectives on gender and sexuality: “The Celtic world was one that gave much greater scope to the role of women and more fully incorporated both the feminine and the masculine into its religious life and imagery.” Either male or female images may be used to describe God... “Our sexual energies reflect, in their goodness, God’s yearnings for intimacy, creative expression and new life.”

St. Patrick’s mission to Ireland in the 5th century exemplifies many of the distinguishing features of Celtic spirituality. The famous ‘Breastplate’ hymn attributed to Patrick includes the following lines:

*I bind unto myself today
The virtues of the star-lit heaven,
The glorious sun’s life-giving ray,
The whiteness of the moon at even,
The flashing of the lightning free,
The whirling wind’s tempestuous shocks, The stable earth, the deep salt sea*

Around the old eternal rocks.

“There is not in the Celtic way of seeing a great gap between heaven and earth. Rather, the two are seen as inseparably intertwined.” In the century following Patrick’s mission to Ireland “there came the greatest flourishing of Celtic spirituality... in which 6th century Ireland witnessed a creative encounter between the Christianity that Patrick and others had brought and the nature mysticism of the pre-Christian Druidic religion... The pre-Christian nature mysticism became almost like the Old Testament of the Celtic Church... The gospel was seen as fulfilling rather than destroying the old Celtic mythologies.”

Newell spoke with particular affection of the legendary 6th century Brigid, the abbess of Kildare. “Kildare means ‘church of the oaks’ and oak groves had of course been sacred places for the Druids... and St. Brigid’s Kildare was a Celtic religious community for both men and women. There were many such double monasteries, for the Celtic Church neither totally separated the sexes nor displayed the fear of sexuality that was to dominate much of the Western Church. As in Eastern Orthodoxy, there were married priests and celibate monks, but the ecclesiastic leadership of women such as Brigid was peculiar to the Celtic Church. The Irish came to revere Brigid as their patron — or rather, mother — saint, second only to Patrick. Pre-Christian holy sites and communities like Kildare, including that on the western island of Iona and the monastery of Lindisfarne, have regained their Celtic character to this day.

Consider the Celtic Cross, in which creation and Scripture themes are again combined and inseparable. “The orb at the center of the cross, probably representing the sun and the light of the world, and certainly the Scripture and nature images carved on opposite sides of the cross, express the desire to hold together the revelation of God in creation and the revelation of God in the Bible. They reflect the practice of listening for the Word of God in nature as well as in the Scriptures.”

WE RESPOND

Offertory: VU#540 Grant us God

Offertory/Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

Closing Hymn: Called by Earth and Sky MV#135

*Called by earth and sky,
promise of hope held high,
This is our sacred living trust,
Treasure of life sanctified,
Called by earth and sky.*

*Precious these waters, endless seas,
Deep ocean's dream,
Waters of healing, rivers of rain,
The wash of love again.*

*Precious this gift, the air we breathe;
Wind born and free.
Breath of the Spirit,
blow through this place,
Our gathering and our grace.*

*Precious these mountains, ancient sands;
Vast fragile land.
Seeds of our wakening,
rooted and strong,
Creation's faithful song.*

*Precious the fire that lights our way,
Bright dawning day.
Fire of passion, sorrows undone,
Our faith and justice one.*

Commissioning and Benediction

May the love of the Holy One enfold you
May the labour of the Birthing One deliver you
May the wisdom of the Wild One Sustain you
And May the peace of the All in One hold you,
Bless you and guide you home.
Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- March 15** Annual Reports due to Rev Meg!!!!
March 17 Lent 5 St. Patrick's Day
March 21 Healing Prayer Group on Zoom. 6:30-8pm
March 24 Lent 6 Palm/Passion Sunday w. Communion
HOLY WEEK begins
March 26 Lenten Study group 3:30 -5 p.m.
March 29 GOOD FRIDAY—Stations of the Cross
March 31 EASTER services.
SUNRISE (outdoor fire) 7 am
EASTER BREAKFAST 7:30-8:30
FESTIVAL of the RESURECTION: EASTER
April 7 Easter 1 Guest minister: Lorna Bywater
April 10 Leadership Team Mtg. 10 am,
April 10-13 BLOOMING VIOLET 2 evenings, 2 matinees
Check website for tickets and more info,
April 14 Shared Worship and ANNUAL MEETING
May 10 Mother's Day Service and back to 3 preaching points Re-opening of Knox and Stewart

Ongoing Stewardship: Please consider increasing your offering if you are able.

There are several different options for you to gift your offering to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge.

1. In person and on the plate.
2. Via PAR (preauthorized remittance). Then you don't have to think about it again. Money is withdrawn monthly
3. By e-transfer. The email address for donations via e-transfer is lobunitedchurches@gmail.com In the subject line/comment please identify to which of the Churches you wish to donate, Pioneer in Hillside, Stewart in Dwight or Knox in Dorset.
4. By cheque: If you send a cheque, please make it out to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge and mail it to: LOB United Churches, P.O. Box 196, Dwight, ON P0A 1H0

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