

The Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025 + 4pm



Oscar Romero - Eric E Castro - Creative Commons License

“Let us not tire of preaching love; it is the force that will overcome the world. Let us not tire of preaching love. Though we see that waves of violence succeed in drowning the fire of Christian love, love must win out; it is the only thing that can.”

— Oscar Romero - Assassinated on March 24, 1980 in a chapel at Hospital de la Divina Providencia, El Salvador, while celebrating Communion.



Welcome to the AbbeyChurch

*No matter who you are or what you are carrying today,
know you are beloved and so very welcome here.*

At the AbbeyChurch, we tell stories of faith, encourage hope, share meals, care for each other and for God's creation, and strive to practice the teachings of Jesus.

We're at different places in our faith journey but we share a guiding sacred story as found in scripture (The Bible) and summarised in our Christian creeds.

We share a willingness to honestly wrestle with God—with our questions and doubts, our disillusionment with our institutions and our concern for our world.

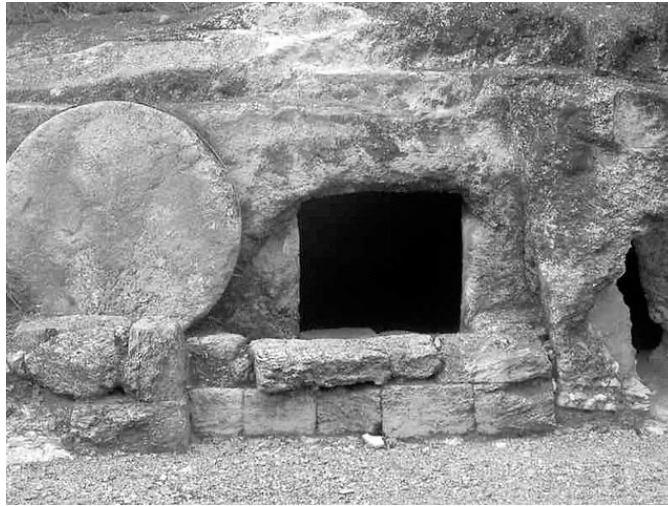
We invite diversity in our community and our leadership; old, young, rich, poor, conservative, liberal, radical, single, married, LGBTQ2IA+, straight, evangelical, progressive, overeducated, undereducated, overhoused, underhoused, certain, doubting, hurting, thriving (to name a few).

As a witness to unity in diversity, the AbbeyChurch is an affirming (full inclusion and leadership of 2SLGBTQ2IA+ folk) shared ministry of The United Church of Canada and The Anglican Church of Canada.

We draw on those spiritual traditions, as well as others across the Christian spectrum. We're also connected to Emmaus, an intentional community that is inspired by monasticism and whose members make commitments to prayer, presence and simplicity.

We believe that Christ's love and grace binds our differences together and renews our hope as we gather each week at Jesus' table of radical welcome.

The AbbeyChurch acknowledges that we worship and pray on the stolen territory of the Ləkʷəŋən peoples', the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations. We strive to journey toward reparation, right relationship and reconciliation with justice. We confess the complicity of our religious traditions and institutions in the loss of life, lands, languages, spiritualities and cultures of the First Peoples' of these lands. We are grateful for the ongoing wisdom, stewardship and tending of these lands and apprentice ourselves to this good work of caring for creation and seeking to live in right-relationship with each other.



Lent: Living towards Liberation

Lent is a time for honesty. Sometimes it feels like the world is split between those who have it all together and those who are struggling to make sense of it all.

To you who are struggling - welcome. This is a time for you.

To those who have it together - welcome. May you know ever deeper solidarity with those who are struggling, (and give yourself grace when you discover you don't have it quite so together).

This Lent we are drawn to the story of Jesus and Lazarus.

Lazarus is dead and buried, yet his friend Jesus comes and speaks a life-giving word, has the stone rolled away, calls him out, and invites his community to unbind him from his graveclothes.

Lent is a time for us of introspection, a time of preparation and reflection, a time of shining a light into the tombs of our lives and waiting for God's voice to speak.

Lent is where we get honest about all the tombs we find ourselves inside. All the ways cannot make sense of our lives, of our calling, of the mystery of God.

Lent is a time of fasting from all the things that we compulsively fill ourselves with, distract ourselves with, or use to drown out the depths of our souls deep longing.

What might it mean for you to hear the stone rolling away and the voice of God bidding you to new life?

What grave clothes might we collectively strip away for one another? What sort of practices orients us back to the central work of liberation and living the risen life?

What creative ways might God invite us to share in this work together?

As we gather each week, we hear the words of the song "Loosen" by Aly Halpert - we invite you to hear this song as an invocation, sung to you and over you from your Divine loving parent +

**Loosen, loosen, baby
You don't have to carry
The weight of the world in your muscles and bones
Let go, let go, let go...
Holy breath, and holy name
Will you ease, will you ease this pain...**

(and check out their music here: <https://www.alyhalpert.com/>)

We Gather

Tolling of the Bells

We begin in silence and gentleness

Confession *(we sing)*

Have Mercy on Me, Have Mercy on Me. O Lord, have mercy. O Lord, have mercy.

God of compassion,

We know the times we have clung to sackcloth not of our making, when we have lived clothed in weariness, cloaked with anger, and enshrouded by sorrow.

We grieve the occasions when we have lived with alienation rather than association, when we have sought isolation rather than consolation, when our wounds within have shut others out. We confess our fear of the dark and our uncertainty of the light.

Have Mercy on Me, Have Mercy on Me. O Lord, have mercy. O Lord, have mercy.

Yet you have placed within us, O God, a longing for survival, a hunger for your wholeness, a yearning for your comfort, and a hope for our collective healing.

Bless our mouths to name our wounds, that we may not fear them; our bodies, that we might cherish them; our hearts, that we may delight in their longings, and our souls, that we may trust the wisdom of the stories they hold. Grant us the courage to be touched by You, that when our days of weeping are done, we may wear your garments of gladness, and stand together in the power of your resurrection. In the name of the risen Christ, we pray. Amen.

Selections of Prayer © Jan L. Richardson, from In Wisdom's Path: Discovering the Sacred in Every Season

Have Mercy on Me, Have Mercy on Me. O Lord, have mercy. O Lord, have mercy.

Sandra McCracken & Thad Cockrell©2015 DRINK YOUR TEA MUSIC (ASCAP). Admin. by Music Services. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Edited by Joel Littlepage (joel.littlepage@gmail.com)

Absolution

The God who calls us to return, draw you in and cleanse you from your sins, that you may walk in the freedom and love of Jesus Christ our God. **Amen**

Children and youth are warmly invited to join our leaders in AbbeyKids!

Opening song: Almighty God

Almighty god to you all hearts are open.
Search and know our thoughts and anxious fear.
Wash us in the fountain of your mercy.
Come with your light. We cannot hide from you.

Almighty god to you all hearts are open.
With gratitude we raise our song to you.
Come and fill the praises of your people.
In grace and truth You make us new again.
Lord have mercy x3

Almighty God to you all hearts are open.
We long for more than what this world provides.
No shallow spring will ever satisfy us.
Your river deep floods over everything. Lord have mercy x3

Almighty God to you all hearts are open.
You take away our sickness and our sin
Oh lamb of God we gather at your table.
In bread and wine You will supply our needs. Lord have mercy x3
Sandra McCracken.

The Poem - Selected and Read by Rebecca Yeo, Poet-in-Residence

We Proclaim

The Hebrew Scripture

A reading from the prophet Isaiah (55:1-3, 6-11)

Hear, everyone who thirsts; come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your earnings for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 63 Deus, Deus meus

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; *

my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry land where there is no water.

Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, *

that I might behold your power and your glory.

For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; *

my lips shall give you praise.

So will I bless you as long as I live *

and lift up my hands in your name.

My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, *

and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

when I remember you upon my bed, *

and meditate on you in the night watches.

For you have been my helper, *

and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

My soul clings to you; *

your mighty hand holds me fast.

...Glory to You, Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

Please rise in body or in spirit as we open our hearts to hear the good news.

Gospel Acclamation: Restore Us Again

Restore us again God of our salvation
Revive us again in your unfailing love

We long for Egypt in the wilderness, a kingdom made of dust
We built an idol out of happiness, a paradise of rust
We lost all the meaning, drowned out the feeling, our hearts barely beating

Restore us again God of our salvation
Revive us again in your unfailing love

Paul Zach (feat. Liz Vice), God Is the Friend of Silence, 2018. CCLI

The Gospel

Let us proclaim the gospel from the rooftops. **With our words and with our lives!**
A reading from the Gospel according to Luke. At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish just as they did.” Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the man working the vineyard, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.’ ”
Let us proclaim the gospel from the rooftops. **With our words and with our lives!**

Sermon

Michelle Slater

Bell. Silence for reflection. Bell.

Please rise in body or in spirit as we affirm our faith and sing our ancient Story of trust.

Creed

We believe that God is present
in the darkness before dawn;
in the waiting and uncertainty
where fear and courage join hands,
conflict and caring link arms,
and the sun rises over barbed wire.

We believe in a with-us God
who sits down in our midst
to share our humanity.

We affirm a faith
that takes us beyond a safe place:

into action, into vulnerability
and onto the streets.

We commit ourselves to work for change
and put ourselves on the line;
to bear responsibility, take risks,
live powerfully
and face humiliation;
to stand with those on the edge;
to choose life and listen to the Spirit
for the sake of our neighbour
and God’s new community of hope. Amen
Iona Community

Our Prayers

The Peace

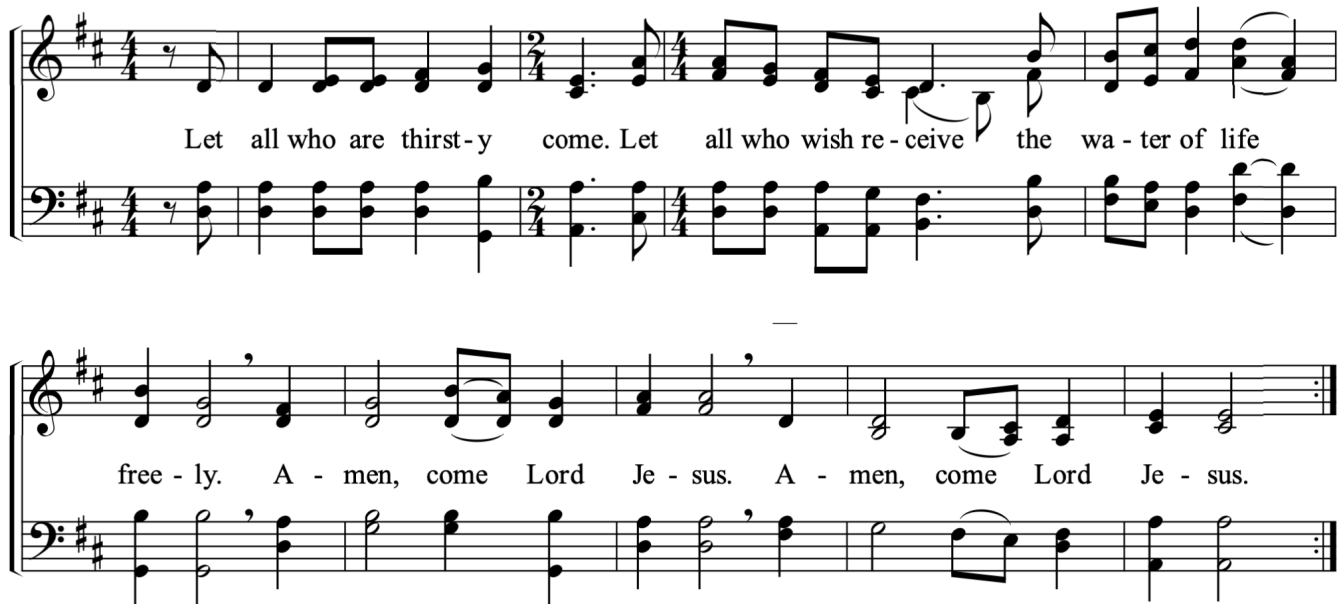
The peace of Christ be always with you. **And also with you.**

You are invited to share a sign of peace to those near you.

Offering: Contributions to our common life can be made at the back of the space (now or later) in the boxes or using debit or credit card. You can e-transfer donations to treasurer@emmauscommunity.ca (that's our preferred method) or donate to AbbeyChurch / Emmaus via CanadaHelps by using the QR Code to the right. All donations are eligible for a charitable tax receipt.)



The Offertory Song: Let all who are thirsty Come



Let all who are thirst-y come. Let all who wish re-ceive the wa-ter of life

free-ly. A-men, come Lord Je-sus. A-men, come Lord Je-sus.

We Celebrate

As we prepare for this holy feast we are reminded that all are welcome to receive wherever they find themselves in their spiritual journey. You are also welcome to come forward for a simple blessing if you do not wish to receive. If you don't wish to receive, place your hands across your chest to receive a prayer of blessing

Prayer Over The Gifts

Let us pray,

God of the wilderness, we give these offerings in gratitude,

rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us.

We give these offerings in faith,

trusting that you will provide for our needs.

We give these offerings in hope,

knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world.

And with these offerings, this bread and wine, we give ourselves;

May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen

Joanna Harader, <http://spaciousfaith.com/>, Alt.

The Great Thanksgiving / The Most Holy Eucharist

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Holy God, how wonderful is the work of your hands! All of creation echoes the music of your praise. When sin had scarred the world, You made a covenant to renew the whole of creation. You embraced a people as your own and filled them with longing for a peace that would last and a justice that would never fail. **Glory to you forever and ever.**

Through countless generations your people hungered for the bread of freedom, from them you raised up Jesus the living bread in whom all our hungers are filled. You have sent your Holy Spirit as a mighty stream to refresh and renew the face of the earth. Therefore with the company of heaven and all your creation, we sing:

Holy Holy Holy Lord, God of power and might!

Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory!

Hosanna in the Highest!

+Blessed is the one who comes, in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the Highest!

While Jesus was eating with his disciples, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take, this is my body. Do this in remembrance of me."

Glory to you forever and ever.

As supper was ending, Jesus took the wine and after blessing it, poured it, gave it to them and said, "take, this is my blood, do this in remembrance of me.

Glory to you forever and ever.

Holy God, we give you thanks for the mystery of faith given to us in Jesus your Child:

Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again (2x)

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be for us the body and blood of your Christ. Grant that with burning hearts we may be a people of hope justice and love. As grain was scattered across this land, then gathered and made one in this bread, so may your church scattered to the ends of the earth, be gathered and made one in your love. **Amen.**

St. Lydia's Table, alt.

Silence is kept

The Prayer of Jesus

As beloved children of a loving parent, we pray as Jesus taught:

Our *Father (*or Parent, Abba, Amma, Source, Mother etc)

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.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God given for the life of the world.

Thanks be to God!

All are welcome (none compelled!) to receive at Jesus' table! The bread is gluten-free but may contain almond flour, egg and dairy. The juice is in the small cups. Wine is in the larger common cup. Please refrain from dipping the bread.

Song (prerecorded): O God will you Restore us?

Bifrost Arts, Lamentations, 2016. CCLI.

Song: Come to me

Come to me. Walk with me.
Learn the rhythms of my grace
Come to me. I have all you need.
Learn to rest even while you are awake

Are you tired? Are you worried? Worn out from the day?
Have you been in a hurry? I will slow the pace.

Sandra McCracken, Rain for Roots, 2014.

Song: Breastplate of St. Patrick

When my work takes me places I don't want to go; Christ before me
And my heart aches with sorrow as I hit the road; Christ be with me
When the care of my family takes all that I have; Christ within me
When I'm worn and exhausted, ashamed that I'm mad; Christ defend me

I rise up today in a strength that is not my own
I'm held by the promise of God that I'm never alone

When I'm tossed to the side and I want to give up; Christ beside me
When I'm busting my ass but it's never enough; Christ beside me
When I work hard but someone else gets the reward; God's eyes see me
I ask for promotion and they shut the door; God's ears hear me

I rise up today in a strength that is not my own
I'm held by the promise of God that I'm never alone

When I climb the first steps toward a long-held dream; Christ above me
And I leap out in faith and I hope to find wings; Christ beneath me

Porter's Gate Worship Project, Worship for Workers, 2023

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray, God of mercy and forgiveness, may we who share this sacrament live together in unity and peace, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

We Are Sent

The Blessing

Closing Song: I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus. 3X No turning back, no turning back.
Though I may wonder, still I will follow. 3X No turning back, no turning back.
And in the struggle, we walk together. 3X No turning back, no turning back.
I have decided to follow Jesus. 3X No turning back, no turning back.

The Sending

Go in peace to walk in Jesus's way of love and liberation.

Thanks be to God. Amen!

We'll be back next Sunday at 4pm.

*QomQem volunteering is happening in the kitchen **now** - all are welcome to come help pack sandwiches for the street family.*

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, **March 26 - Lenten Book Study: The Waiting is the hardest part (Read chapters: 5, 8, 10)**

We will continue gathering 6:45-8:15pm (see final page for further details or talk to Matt)

Thursday, April 24th - Martyn Joseph Live

Welsh Singer-Songwriter back (again!) for an unforgettable evening

7:30 - 9:30 pm - 932 Balmoral (AbbeyChurch)

Tickets online at Eventbrite or in-person at The Local General Store

Weekday Prayer

Mondays at 9 am - Morning Prayer with Centering Prayer @ Emmaus/AbbeyChurch office (off the Balmoral parking lot, metal stairs up) - approx 45 mins - in-person only.

Tuesdays at 9 am - Morning Prayer @ Emmaus/AbbeyChurch office - in-person and online on Zoom - approx 25-30 mins.

Thursdays at 8:15 am - morning prayer - Emmaus/AbbeyChurch office and online on zoom.

Fridays at 8:15 am - morning prayer - *on-line zoom only*

Contact us for information on accessible entrance or zoom/liturgies link

Donations to our Common Life and Ministry

We are so grateful for your presence with us! A huge thank you to everyone who supported our ministry in 2024 and made it possible to continue to thrive in the place God has called us to. If you are interested in donating to our common life, you can now send offerings by **e-transfer to treasurer@emmauscommunity.ca** or talk to Lynn, our treasurer to sign up for monthly giving (PAR)! There's also a point of sale machine at the back table for debit or credit donations. Or give through Canadahelps by clicking the QR code here: All donations are eligible for a charitable receipt for income tax purposes.



Our Partnership with QomQem: **ONGOING Call for Food Donations**

We're welcoming food donations for AbbeyChurch /Emmaus partnership with QomQem coastal connections - an indigenous harm reduction organisation. We'll be using this food to support their street outreach on Sunday evenings. Our folk are also welcomed to assist in sandwich prep after church at 5:30pm most Sundays.

Here is the list of desired items:

- large bags of soft candies to make up mixed candy bags (ie sour keys, cherry blasters etc)
- Large jars of peanut butter, Nutella or jam
 - Tins of Gatorade powder
 - Tins of hot chocolate powder (once it starts to cool)
- Sweet treats like pre wrapped Rice Krispie squares, wagon wheels, ding dongs etc
 - Fruit cups
- Flavoured Apple sauce cups



NON PERISHABLE FOOD URGENTLY NEEDED!

Night outreach - We're at it again!
We are in need of non-perishable foods to support Street Family!

What's Needed?

- Large Tins of: Peanut Butter, Jam & Nutella
- Fruit Cups,
- Packaged treats (wagonwheels etc)
- Large bags of Soft candies
- Gatorade Powder Tins
- Camp gear!

WE NEED YOU!



TO ARRANGE DROP OFF, CONTACT:

admin@qomqem.com / 250-291-1204

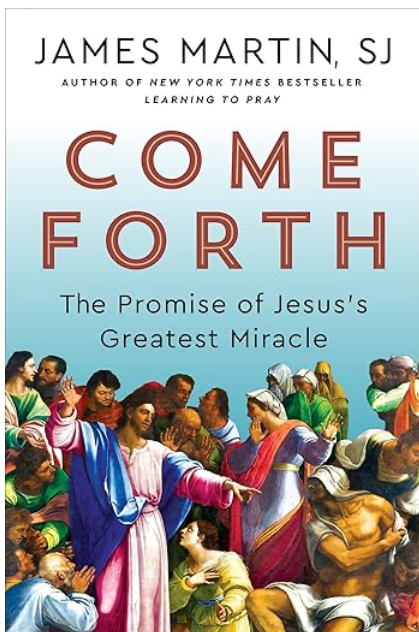
- Soft chew granola bars (nutrigrain, etc)
- Small easy peel oranges and bananas (for Sunday drop-off)
 - Gatorade/powerade bottles
- Home baking on the day of - starting September 22nd (ideally 150 units)
 - Sunscreen, batteries, flashlights

Up to 150 people served each night, so bulk family/sized items appreciated. We now have a treasure chest at the back of the church. Thanks for any help you can be in this amazing work.



admin@emmauscommunity.ca + www.abbeychurch.ca
778.557.4166 We would love to connect.

This leaflet is printed on carbon neutral tree-free paper. Please recycle.



Lenten Book Group - get your copy today!

Join Matt for a journey through Jesus' encounter with Lazarus!

We will read *Come Forth* by James Martin, SJ, and focus in on a few key moments. 6:45 we gather for tea and discussion, closing at 8pm with a brief evening prayer/examen, and departing by 8:15.

The book is available locally at Bolen and Chapters, or by special order or online/as an ebook. Email us admin@emmauscommunity.ca

Mar 12	-	Lazarus, Scripture, culture and us (1,2)
Mar 19	-	Characters and costumes (3, 4, 6)
Mar 26	-	The Waiting is the hardest part (5, 8, 10)
Apr 2	-	The Gift of Tears (12, 13, 14)
Apr 9	-	Lazarus Come Forth! (15, 16, 17)