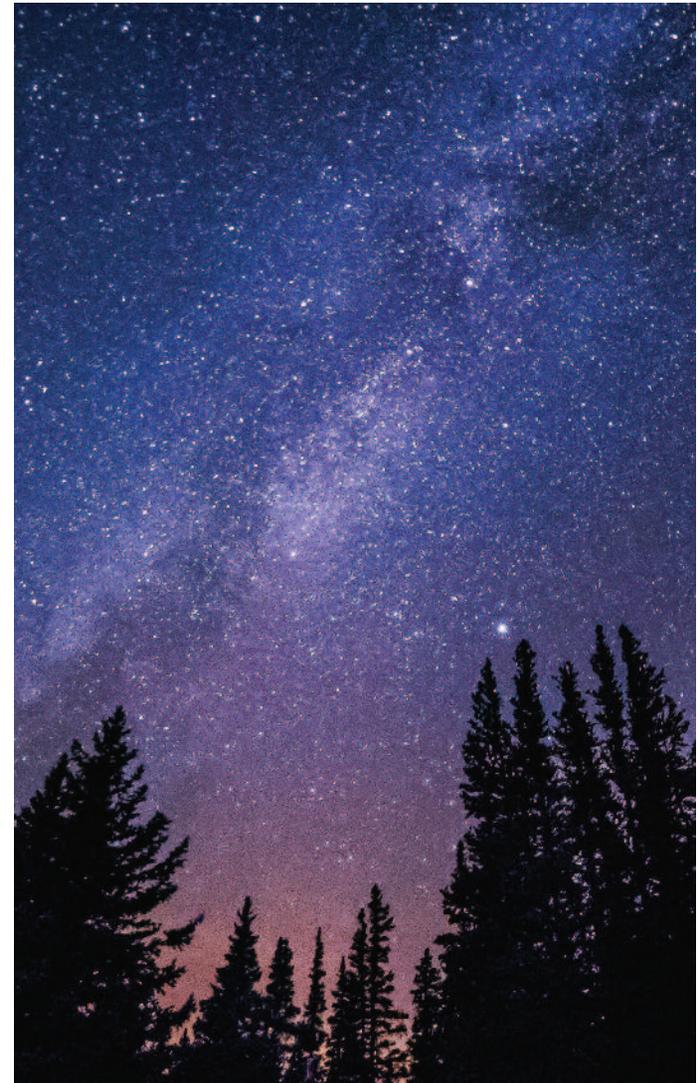


God is with us in the dark.

In December, the sun sets earlier every evening, and the night grows longer.

Advent begins in the dark. The gospel scripture for the first Sunday in Advent creates a vivid image of darkness — with no sun to brighten the moon, and stars falling out of the sky. These words are unsettling for those of us who would rather focus on festive lights and warm candlelight in this season. And yet, Advent is a time to be unsettled, to peer into the darkness of our world, and allow ourselves to be painfully aware of suffering and struggle. This awareness causes us to long for change, to yearn for the Light of the World to come again and dispel the darkness. Our hope that Christ will come again enables us to see in the dark, to navigate our way through personal despair and global fear. The gospel writer encourages us to stay awake and pay attention. The darkness may frighten us, but it is in the dark we are most ready to receive Jesus the Christ.

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, Minister of the Chapel at Knox College



God with us

God is with us as we prepare.

Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark's gospel does not begin with the birth of Jesus. There is no baby sweetness here, no compelling story of a lowly birth, no angel songs or excited young shepherds. There is an odd man preaching in the middle of nowhere, telling people to get ready, get clean, get forgiven. John isn't very appealing — he is described as a wild kind of man announcing a difficult message. And yet, he is attracting great crowds of people from Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside. These are desperate crowds filled with yearning for transformation.

John's good news is that the Lord is on his way. The people who are yearning for freedom from oppression, for forgiveness, for abundant life, will be satisfied when Jesus arrives on the scene. John's job is to point beyond himself to Jesus. He is making sure that nothing is standing in the way of the people being able to recognize and receive Jesus when he comes.

What about us? Is there anything that stands in the way of our being able to recognize and receive Jesus when he comes?

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, Minister of the Chapel at Knox College



God with us

God is with us in destruction.

In the midst of World War II, on November 14, 1940, Coventry Cathedral was destroyed by fire bombs. The ruins of the Cathedral remain today, and one can wander and wonder about the destructive powers of human technology.

The prophet Isaiah addressed a community that understood these destructive powers very well. Even in the midst of destruction, the prophet proclaims a promise of restoration. He enables an inconceivable image — ruins raised up and repaired, generations of devastation made whole and beautiful again. It is indeed difficult to imagine such restoration.

Can Haiti, or Kabul, or Aleppo be rebuilt? What about Fort McMurray or Lac-Mégantic? What of flooded fields or communities unravelled by poverty? Can God restore our devastated relationships?

From the wreckage of Coventry Cathedral arises a new structure — stunningly modern, soaring high above the ruins of the old. It serves as a reminder that our God can and does restore what is broken. The new does not merely imitate the old — it reflects God's power and promise of a restored creation.

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, Minister of the Chapel at Knox College



God with us

God is with us in our humanity.

The angel appears to Mary and talks of greatness, thrones, and never-ending kingdoms. Mary is more practical. She asks the key question, proving that although she is inexperienced she is very much aware of the way babies come about, and very sure that what the angel is proposing breaks the basic rules of human biology. “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel reassures her that nothing is impossible with God. Mary’s question reminds us, however, of the very human way that God chose to come among us. This story is about real human bodies — a very young mother for whom childbirth will be frightening and dangerous. A flesh and blood baby boy born in a gush of water and unable to see further than his mother’s face. In her own body, Mary is able to grow and sustain Love incarnate. She is a God-bearer (*theotokos*).

In what ways do we carry God in our bodies, nurturing Love incarnate? In what way does God transform our bodies into vessels that are able to offer blessing to others?

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, Minister of the Chapel at Knox College



God with us

God is with us in unexpected and unusual places.

On Jesus' first arrival into the world, there was not enough space at the inn for a little baby and his travel-weary parents. The inn was too crowded, so Jesus was born in a manger amongst the animals.

The biggest event in human history happened quietly and inconspicuously. Not expecting the Messiah to be born to such a humble couple in an unexpected place like Nazareth, many people missed it.

It is also true in our time that Jesus continues to show up in unusual and unexpected places. Are we paying close enough attention to see where Jesus is appearing in the world and in our lives?

Christmas is a good time to reflect on how we make space for Jesus. Have we been so busy with the details of our lives that we've forgotten who we live for? Have we failed to invite Jesus into our homes because our guest list is already too full? Have we forgotten to set a place for him at our table because our to-do list has grown too long?

Remember, Jesus shows up in unexpected and unusual places. Let us be vigilant and make room for him because he is coming again.

The Rev. Sybil Mosley, Livingstone Presbyterian Church, Montreal.



God with us

God is with us in Jesus.

While many in Israel were longing for deliverance from the Romans, Simeon was looking for more: “the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). It had been revealed to him that by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw the Messiah with his own eyes.

Simeon happened to be at the temple in Jerusalem on the same day that Joseph and Mary brought the seven-week-old Jesus for a purification sacrifice.

Moved by the Spirit, Simeon took baby Jesus in his arms and praised God saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation...” (29-30).

All of this expresses Simeon’s sense of fulfillment. Holding the Christ child, Simeon knew the consolation of Israel had come. With the conviction of the Spirit, he declared Jesus to be “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel” (32).

The Rev. Peter Ma, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Markham, ON.



God with us

God is with us in the midst of division.

Paul reminds the church at Ephesus about the grace of God and how it extends to all people through Christ. Despite Paul's unifying message, theological and doctrinal questions have continued to be sources of separation and division among believers. We are "members of the same body," yet, as a church and as a denomination, we often find ourselves divided.

Paul maintained a firm belief in Christ and his message of reconciliation, even when faced with social pressure from religious leaders, persecution, and imprisonment. He continued to preach about the grace of God and the "boundless riches of Christ" (3:9).

The gospel of reconciliation points us to the finished work of Christ on the cross. As a church, we are called do the same as Paul by trusting in God's grace and living out the reconciliation made possible to us through Christ's sacrifice.

When faced with challenging questions or situations, let us live as children of grace by recognizing each other as members of same body and trusting that Christ, who is the Lord of all, will see us through.

*The Rev. Sampson Afoakwah, Minister of Montreal West
Presbyterian Church.*



God with us

God is with us in uncertainty.

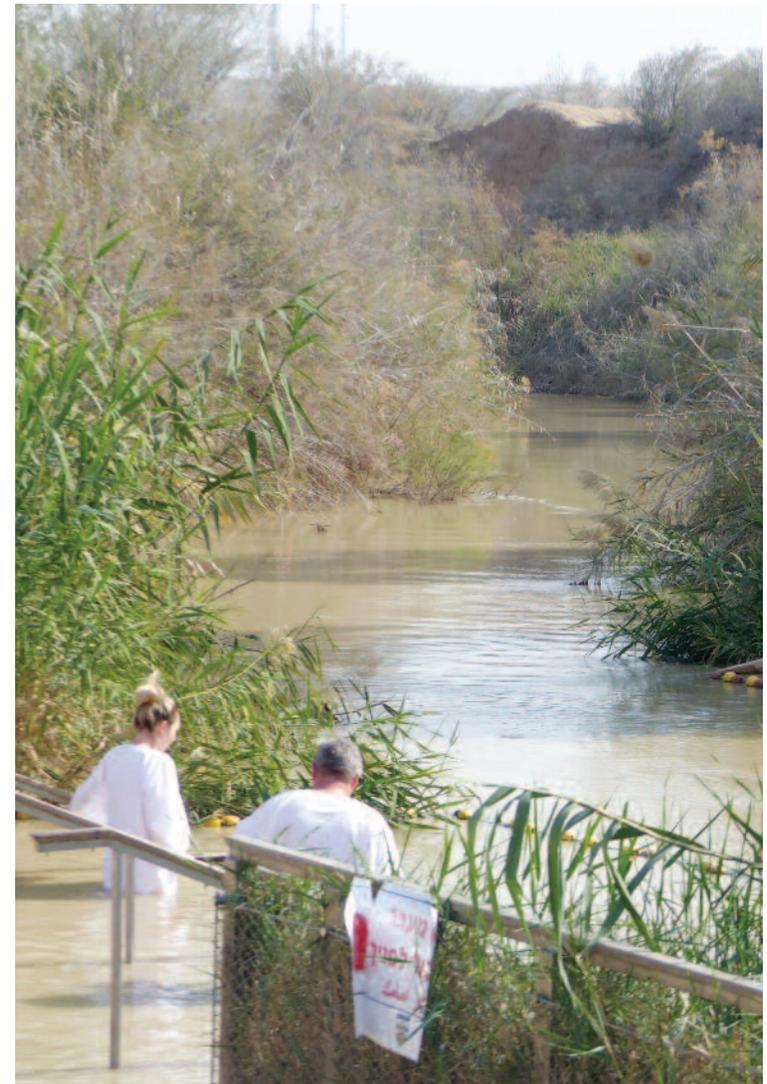
“Can anything good come from Nazareth?” (John 1:46)

The question that Nathanael asks Philip after being invited to meet Jesus is one that may seem to us, two thousand years later, charmingly naïve because we know that indeed something very good — our savior and hope for all nations — came out of Nazareth. Yet, despite knowing how the story unfolds, we also have moments of questioning God’s presence in our midst.

To answer his friend’s question, Philip invites Nathanael to “come and see” Jesus. Christ welcomes Nathanael and praises him for being an honest man. Recognizing that Christ has seen him and knows his heart, Nathanael’s uncertainty immediately dissolves.

Jesus knows us like he knew Nathanael, and His words to Nathanael at the end of their encounter can be read as a reassuring promise to us: “You will see greater things than these” (50). If we continue to learn to live as people of God, testifying to the goodness of the Savior who came out of Nazareth in our words and actions, we can be confident that great things will happen in our midst.

Emily Hill – Education Program Coordinator, Canadians Ministries



God with us

Photo of the Jordan River from a recent trip to Israel.
Photo by the Rev. Dr. Deborah Hart

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“He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” John 1:34

God is with us in risk taking.

Imagine feeling like God is calling you to change direction. How easy would it be to let go of everything you have built in order to follow that call?

When reflecting on the story of Jesus calling the first disciples, it may be easy to gloss over the radical nature of their immediate “yes.” The gospel of Mark tells us that the disciples “*immediately* left their nets and followed him” (1:18).

What is it about Jesus’ invitation to “fish for people” that would motivate them to drastically change their lives by following Jesus?

In Jesus, they must have sensed something real and powerful — a new way of being that brought hope and new life.

Jesus extends this invitation to each of us every day, inviting us to live an authentic and abundant life and equipping us to welcome others into the life of faith. Are we willing to respond with the same “yes!” as the disciples?

Canadian Ministries



God with us

God is with us in our astonishment.

In the first chapter of Mark, the newly called disciples travel to Capernaum with Jesus and experience the power of his teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

Instead of describing *what* Jesus taught that day, Mark focuses on the nature of Jesus' teaching and people's reaction to it. He tells us, "They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority" (Mark 1:22).

From humble origins, Jesus taught with miraculous authority, touching the souls of the people. Stepping out of their boats, the disciples didn't know that they were signing on to hear and witness such astounding things. Part of their education involved learning to experience the eye-opening dimensions of divine love, even in the most unexpected of situations.

Jesus' teaching methods were so different from what many people were used to that they were *astounded*. The disciples expected teachers to expound upon the law and its interpretation, but Jesus taught them to look for the living spirit of love that moved through these traditions.

Jesus' teaching through stories that inspire and instruct in the ways of love is just as astounding today as it was in those days. With God's help, we can hear this message anew, rediscovering the wonder experienced by the early disciples.

Emily Hill – Education Program Coordinator, Canadian Ministries



God with us

"They were astounded at his teaching."

Mark 1:22

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights..."

James 1:17



Inspired by God's promise of abundant life, PWS&D envisions a sustainable, compassionate and just world. Upholding love and partnership, together we seek the lasting transformation of vulnerable communities in our global village, helping families get what they need to rise above poverty and hunger, recover from emergency situations and freely pursue their hopes for the future. Through the commitment of our local partners and the generosity of Presbyterians across Canada, God's grace and abundance is nurturing new life.

"This project is a blessing. The cycle of poverty has definitely been reversed because of what is happening now. My grandchildren are going to school and my life has changed."

In Malawi, Tickiness is meeting her basic needs and building a brighter future for her grandchildren since joining a self-help group, where she meets with other women to save and borrow small sums of money to improve their living conditions.

"You have wide hands. Thank you for not forgetting us."

Uprooted from his home in Syria, Abdal is thankful for the food vouchers he received through a PWS&D project in Lebanon. Abdal can purchase groceries for his family while saving money for other living expenses.

"I became confident and developed knowledge on politics and the rights of children and women. I wish to take part in the politics of my country someday, for the well-being of my people and the development of my country."

Shumaila is paving the way for women and girls in Afghanistan to become active members of society after joining a PWS&D-supported camp that offers training on human rights and leadership.

As we respond to the world's pain and despair, we bear witness to the love of God among us, knowing that this amazing work would not be possible without your prayers and support. Thank you!



Faithful
to our calling,
we respond
together.

We
Respond

PWS&D is the international development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

God is with us ...

Peter, James and John had been following Jesus for a long time and witnessed many miracles, yet they were not fully prepared for what happened that day on the mountain.

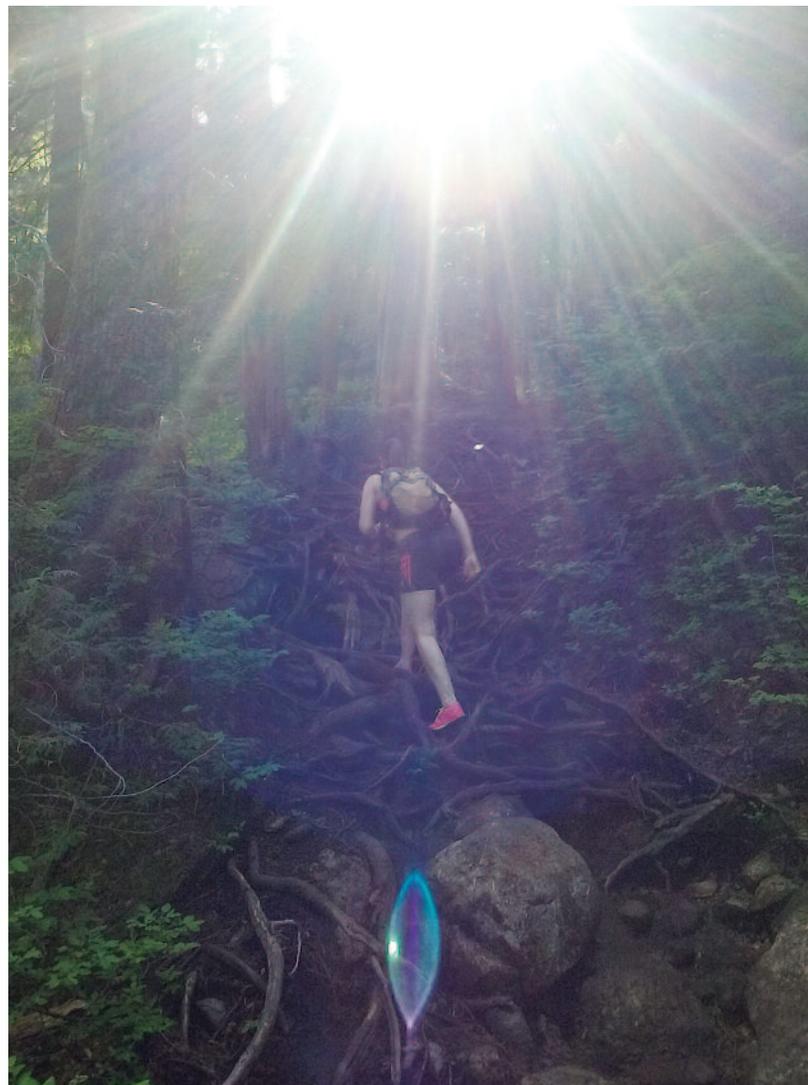
The disciples had been following and listening to Jesus and yet, when their friend and teacher — the man with whom they shared their daily life — was transfigured before them, they were terrified. Not only did Jesus' face shine with divine light, but he was also suddenly in the company of the prophets Elijah and Moses.

Imagine what it must have been like to witness Christ's divine glory revealed in such an obvious/visible way.

The divine had broken into their everyday life, and they were left trying to figure out how to bring together their day-to-day experience of Jesus with the heavenly figure of the Son of God.

We face a similar challenge to the disciples. Each Sunday, we experience God's glory and magnificence in our worship services and have to learn how to take that Sunday experience into the rest of our week. We are not alone in this task. Just as Jesus walked the down the mountain with the disciples, he walks with us.

Canadian Ministries



God with us

God is with us in the wilderness.

Whenever feeling empty, tired or discouraged, let's try to remember that the "wilderness" is where God so often works powerfully in people's lives. We see this with Abraham, Moses, David, Paul and many others.

Lent recalls Jesus' suffering and temptation in the wilderness. What Satan intended for harm during that time, God used for good by strengthening and preparing Jesus for his ministry.

God also accompanies us during our wilderness times, using the opportunity to connect with us, often in new or deeply meaningful ways. "Wilderness" in Hebrew (*midvar*) means wasteland (devoid of habitation), but its root is closely related to the word *davar*, which means "word" or "to speak."

It is important to remember that it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into that wilderness in the first place (Luke 4:1). Even though being in the wilderness unsettles us, it also offers us new opportunities to hear from God.

This Lent, let us listen for God's words and watch for God's presence, even in the most challenging of circumstances.

*Bruce Wilcox, Lay Missionary, Cariboo Presbyterian Church,
Lac La Hache, B.C.*



God with us

God is with us in sacrifice.

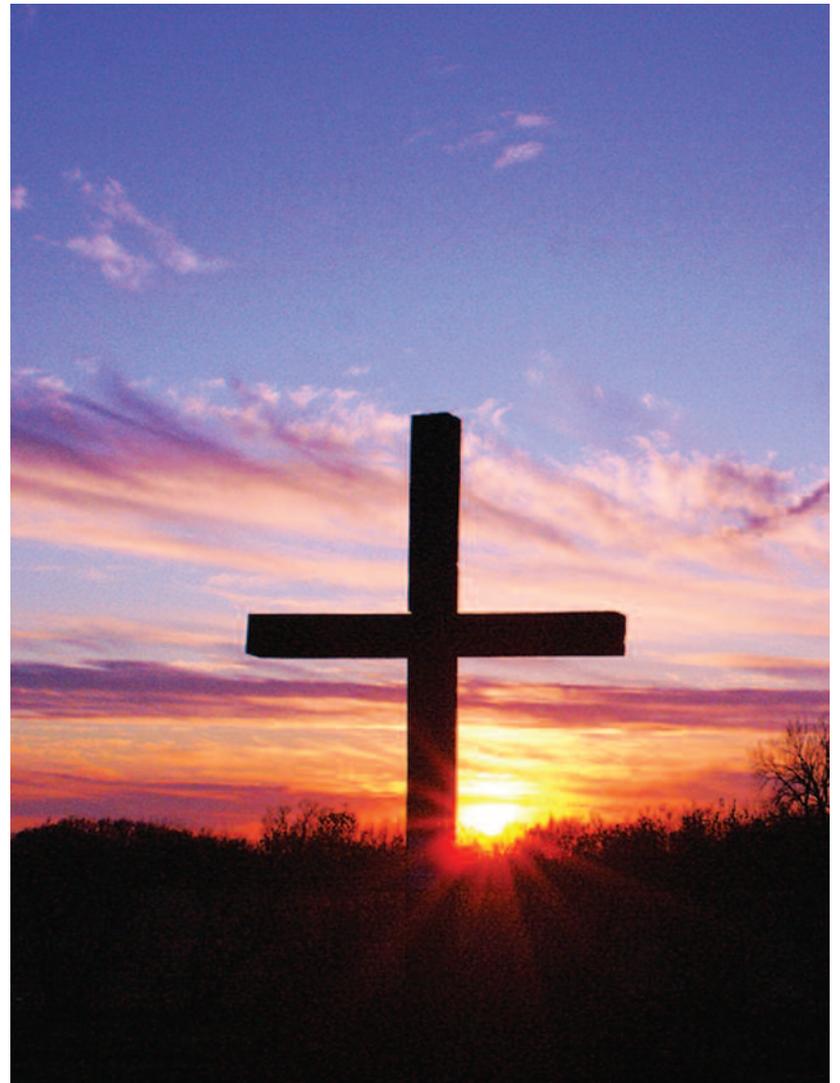
The cross. Its shadow looms during this season of Lent. Like the disciple Peter, we would rather avoid any discussion of suffering and death. We prefer to look backward at the compassionate Jesus who healed and fed and befriended, or ahead to the empty tomb and those glorious stories of resurrection and new life. The phrase *take up your cross and follow me* unsettles us.

Yet Lent offers us the gift of time and space to confront the things that frighten us. We cannot be faithful to God's call to *love one another* and not have our lives change as a result. What will I have to let go of if I want to love my neighbour? How much will it cost me? What will I need to sacrifice?

The gospels do not romanticize discipleship. Jesus was faithful to the ministry of God's love, even when the road became dangerous.

Will we be faithful, I wonder?

The Rev. Hugh Donnelly, Minister at Guildwood Presbyterian Church



God with us

God is with us, pointing the way.

Rules, rules. When I was a kid, I knew about rules. I knew that if I didn't keep my room clean, I wouldn't get my allowance. I knew that if I didn't do my homework, I'd get detention at recess. I knew that if I ever said that to my sister again, I'd be in deep trouble.

And something in me wondered if that was the way God worked. On Sundays we would recite the Ten Commandments; would God punish or reward me for obeying or disregarding these laws?

According to the story, God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites just after the Exodus. Recently freed from slavery, the people suddenly became migrants: without homes, without rootedness, without formal social organization. How would they manage to survive in the desert? Who would show them how to live peacefully with one another?

The commandments came to the Israelites as a gift in a time of need. What we call law, Israel called *Torah*, which means *the finger pointing the way*.

It is a gift of grace to be shown the best ways to live.

*The Rev. Hugh Donnelly, Minister at Guildwood
Presbyterian Church*



God with us

A smiling after-school program participant at
Tyndale St-Georges Community Center, Montreal, QC.

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*"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery." Exodus 20:2*

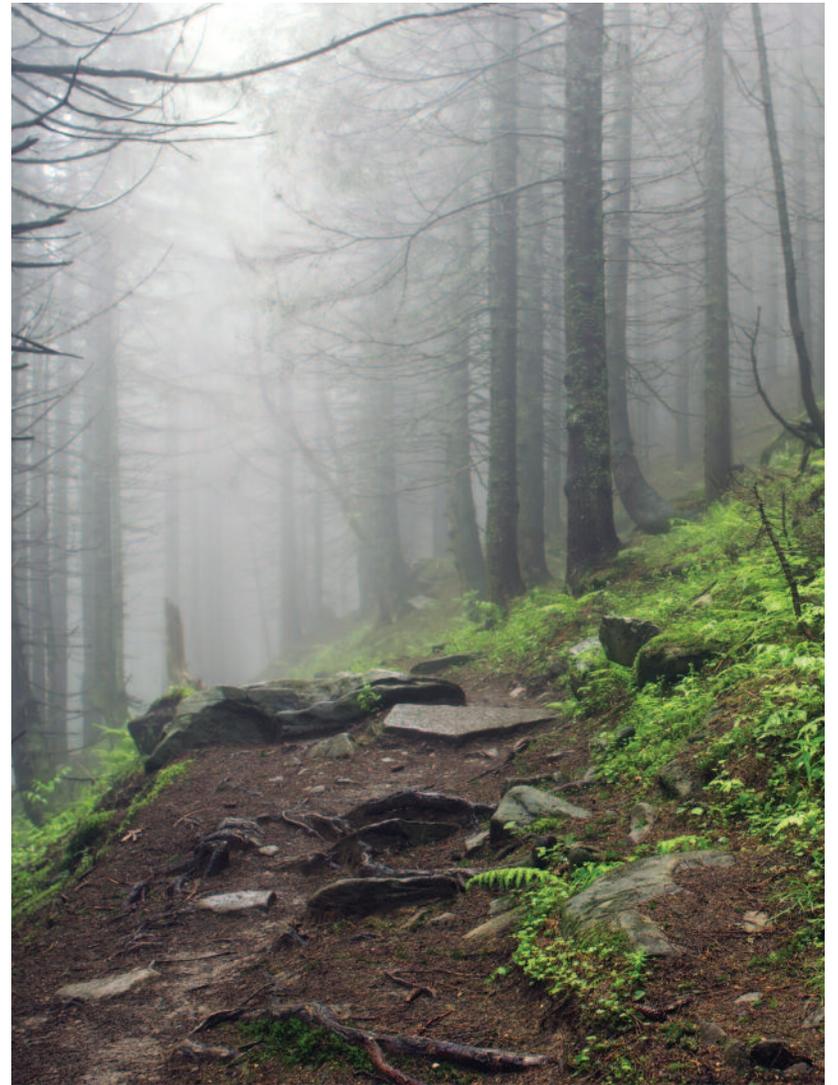
God is with us in our confusion.

There was much Nicodemus didn't understand. He came to Jesus seeking clear answers to big questions, but Jesus' responses confused him.

Jesus told Nicodemus an old story from the time of the Exodus: people bitten by poisonous snakes were saved when they looked up at a statue of a serpent. This strange story points to the mystery of the love of God. It was the love of God — not the statue — that brought healing.

The shadow of the cross looms larger as we approach Holy Week. We struggle to make sense of how an impending death can lead to life. There is much we don't understand. Perhaps all we can do is look up at the cross and trust the love that lies behind it. Love is, after all, a mystery. But it is a love that can lead to transformation.

The Rev. Hugh Donnelly, Minister at Guildwood Presbyterian Church



God with us

God is with us in letting go.

Some things need to die before something new can be born. A seed ceases to be a seed when it becomes a sprout. A mysterious transformation occurs, and the result would make any farmer happy.

I wonder if the same is true for us? Parts of us need to die: old resentments, destructive habits, griefs to which we cling. Yet the tombs in which we find ourselves are comfortable and familiar. We tend to prefer stability, resisting change at all cost. It's painful to let go of the parts of our lives which keep us cold and buried in the ground.

But what if we did learn to let go? What might happen?

Once a seed dies, there is always new life.

And if you doubt that, just wait until Easter...

The Rev. Hugh Donnelly, Minister at Guildwood Presbyterian Church



God with us

God is with us as we enter difficult times.

A parade entered Jerusalem. People lined the roadway, laying cloaks on the ground as a symbolic welcome to the one many believed brought peace to the land. Through the grandest of the city gates, the governor Pontius Pilate led this procession, followed by hundreds of soldiers with helmets and weapons gleaming in the sun. Pilate kept the peace, but Roman peace was a costly peace: it was enforced with the sharp edge of a sword.

A second parade entered Jerusalem. Jesus arrived on a humble, borrowed animal, slipping in through the backdoor of the city. He entered to the accompaniment of singing, followers carrying in their hands not weapons but palm branches. Jesus appeared as one whom many believed could bring peace to the land: a peace rooted in love, forgiveness, and community.

Which parade, I wonder, will we choose to join?

The Rev. Hugh Donnelly, Minister at Guildwood Presbyterian Church



God with us

God is with us in our Suffering

As we reflect on Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sins on Good Friday, our feelings and thoughts are reverent and solemn. We are filled with awe as we think of Jesus' suffering and ultimate sacrifice. We ask ourselves: How could Jesus endure such horrible scourging and pain to die in my place? Am I worthy of such marvelous love and mercy?

Today, we journey with many who are wounded, bruised, beaten and struck down by life's harsh circumstances. Imagine what life would have been like if Jesus had not suffered for us. Because of the Suffering Servant's sacrifice, we have lasting hope.

We will face agony and pain as we endure life's brutal struggles, but the Cross of Christ reminds us that there is hope. Good Friday brings us face to face with Jesus' agony, but, at the same time, it reminds us that God stands with us in our suffering.

The Rev. Germaine Lovelace, Minister at First Presbyterian Church, Kenora



God with us

God is with us this Easter Sunday!

Imagine how devastated the followers of Jesus must have felt when Jesus was arrested that fateful Thursday night. Imagine the shock and horror of it all, when on Friday things turned ugly. Somehow, Jesus ended up being mocked, whipped and crucified.

The Sabbath, the Saturday came and went. Early that Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and a few women disciples decided to go to the tomb where Jesus was laid to prepare the body with spices.

What happened next became the central statement of Christian faith: Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

In John 20, the risen Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, but she didn't recognize him. With tears in her eyes, she thought he was the gardener. When Jesus asked why she was crying, Mary pleaded and almost demanded to know where Jesus' body was laid.

Jesus simply said, "Mary!"

Instantly she knew it was Jesus. Instantly anger, impatience and sadness turned to complete joy. Instantly sorrow, despair and depression turned to great hope. Instantly doubt, uncertainty and confusion turned to strong faith. "Teacher!" she cried, "It's you."

God is with us this Easter Sunday because "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"

*The Rev. Peter Ma, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
Markham, ON.*



God with us

God is with us in chaos.

Like the disciples, we too have the tendency to shut the doors and turn the locks when we face moments of fear and uncertainty. Life is full of unexpected changes, some of which shake our very foundation. When this happens, fear often takes hold of our lives and hinders our ability to see a way forward. Yet, it is into this very chaos that Jesus appears and brings peace.

The disciples' first encounter with the resurrected Jesus teaches us that Christ's peace comes to us in many different ways.

It comes to us as a familiar greeting...

"Peace be with you."

It comes to us as embodied truth...

"...he showed them his hands and his side."

It comes to us as the breath of new life...

"...he breathed on them and said to them,
'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

Christ is always present, breathing new life and hope into all situations. Through him, locked doors are opened and chaos turns into peace. Let us go out into the world, with confidence and joy, testifying to the new life we have found.

Jen de Combe, Associate Secretary, Canadian Ministries



God with us

God is with us when we call.

“Answer me when I call, O God,” David cries at the beginning of Psalm 4, “Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer” (4:1).

Most Christians will be familiar with the pleading tone of these opening lines. We’ve whispered them into the dark after long and stressful days. We’ve mouthed them silently at family gatherings and around hospital bedsides. We’ve spoken them out loud after the latest natural disaster or human tragedy.

When David speaks them, he does so with the confidence of one who has already experienced God’s saving power. Addressing God, he says, “You gave me room when I was in distress” (1). Then, bringing his experience of God’s saving power into his present difficult situation, he reminds himself and others to put their “trust in the Lord” (5).

Psalm 4 reminds us to be thankful for God’s constant saving power, even during difficult times. When David expresses gratefulness for and trust in God’s deliverance, God puts “gladness” in his heart (7) and he is able to “sleep in peace” (8). In times of sorrow as in times of joy, let us call on God with thanks for all that God has done.

Canadian Ministries



God with us

God is with us in adversity.

Psalm 23 is meaningful to so many people because it reminds us of God's enduring presence in moments of struggle and adversity. Its poetic lines confirm without hesitation that God is our guide, healer and provider.

In moments of anxiety...

"you let me catch my breath" (v. 3, The Message).

In moments of disorientation...

"you send me in the right direction"
(v.3, The Message).

In moments of isolation...

"you walk at my side" (v. 4, The Message).

In moments of self-doubt...

"your beauty and love chase after me"
(v. 6, The Message).

Alexandra Belaskie, Community Manager, Social Mentor Network.



God with us

God is with us in being sent.

When an angel of the Lord said to Philip “get up and go,” he immediately got up and started his journey down a “wilderness road” leading south (Acts 8:26-27). Even though he was being summoned from a thriving ministry in Samaria into the wilderness of unfamiliar lands, Philip did not hesitate. He knew that God would continue to work through him in the place he was being sent.

Like Philip, Presbyterian mission staff respond to the call to “get up and go” with confidence that God is making a way for them. Philip didn’t travel very far down the road before he met a person whose heart had been prepared by God to hear the good news. While serving with international partners around the world, mission staff also meet people along the road with whom they journey, mutually working towards the wholeness that God promises for humanity and creation.

On this Mission Awareness Sunday, we pray for current and future mission staff. May they continue to be empowered to “get up and go” by their faith in the Lord who transforms unfamiliar lands into places of fellowship and connection.

International Ministries

To read more about our mission staff or to support their work around the world through Presbyterians Sharing, please visit the International Ministries website: presbyterian.ca/im/missionstaff



God with us

God is with us in every place and in every time.

With the children seated in a circle waiting for the story to begin, the Children & Worship¹ storyteller calmly spreads a satin white underlay on the ground. As she spreads it, she says, "Today is Ascension Sunday, when we celebrate the mystery that Jesus went away so that he could be with us always in every place and in every time."

In every place and in every time... the words linger in the air as she places the white Christ candle in the middle of the satin underlay. As the story proceeds, she uses the candle to illustrate the central mystery of our faith:

Pointing to the unlit candle, "Christ has died."

Striking a match and lighting the candle, "Christ has risen."

Lowering the snuffer and then slowly lifting it, "Christ will come again."

In every place and in every time... the children's eyes watch as the smoke from the candle majestically dissipates in all directions.

We too are meant to experience the ascension with wonderment and awe. This Ascension Sunday, let us watch closely to witness Christ's loving presence as it permeates the entire world, remembering that Christ is with us in every place and every time.

Emily Hill – Education Program Coordinator, Canadian Ministries

¹ The Children and Worship program, developed by Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman in their book *Young Children and Worship*, is designed to help children experience and learn about God through storytelling, wondering, and creative response. Interested in using Children & Worship in your church? Contact Canadian Ministries (canadianministries@presbyterian.ca).



God with us

"While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven." Luke 24:51

God is with us in our families.

Over two decades ago, many churches began to celebrate Christian Family Sunday on the secular holiday known as Mother's Day. The intent is to honour all members of our given and chosen families — mothers, fathers, step-parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbours, friends, etc. It is also a way to acknowledge that "family" is the extended church community. Other church adults, older teens and mentors are a powerful influence in the lives of children. Together, people of all ages make up "the family of God."

In John 17:6-19, Jesus prays for his disciples, many of whom had become like family to him. In his prayer, Jesus describes the disciples as being "given to him" from God (6) and asks that God "protect them" (11) so that his "joy may be complete in them" (13). On this Christian Family Sunday, let us lift up a similar prayer for the family of God:

Loving God,
Thank you for the people you have given to us as companions in this life. Protect and guard all those we name family. Help them to come to know the love and joy of Christ. Amen.

Canadian Ministries

The congregation of King's Presbyterian Church,
New Minas, NS. Photo by Tim Archibald

 The Presbyterian
Church in Canada
presbyterian.ca/worship



God with us

*"All mine are yours, and yours are mine;
and I have been glorified in them." John 17:10*

God is with us in reconciliation.

The Holy Spirit has accompanied God's people in many ways since the dawn of creation. At times it comes as a creative force, at others it confirms truth and strengthens our faith, at others still it empowers us to speak out for justice in difficult times. At Pentecost, the Spirit entered into the world in a dramatic and powerful way. In that moment, the church was born and the people were empowered to testify and to be so much more than they thought possible.

The church is inadequate on its own and needs the Holy Spirit as it seeks to faithfully live out the gospel and bear witness to the world. Today, the church relies upon the Spirit's help to walk alongside our Indigenous brothers and sisters in the journey of healing and reconciliation as we grapple with the harmful legacies of residential schools and colonization.

This is a journey of atonement, truth telling, reconciliation and restoring right relations with Indigenous people. What will reconciliation look like? The Spirit is only beginning to reveal what form this will take. As we wait for the fullness of this truth, we look to our Indigenous brothers and sisters to set the pace and direction of our walk together.

May the Holy Spirit help us overcome the barriers that hinder this journey, and may there be new life for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in this land.

Stephen Allen – Associate Secretary, Justice Ministries



God with us

Indigenous dancer at the WMS Women's Gathering 2017.
Photo: WMS Kim, Lee and Park

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*"You are also to testify because you have been with me
from the beginning." John 15:27*