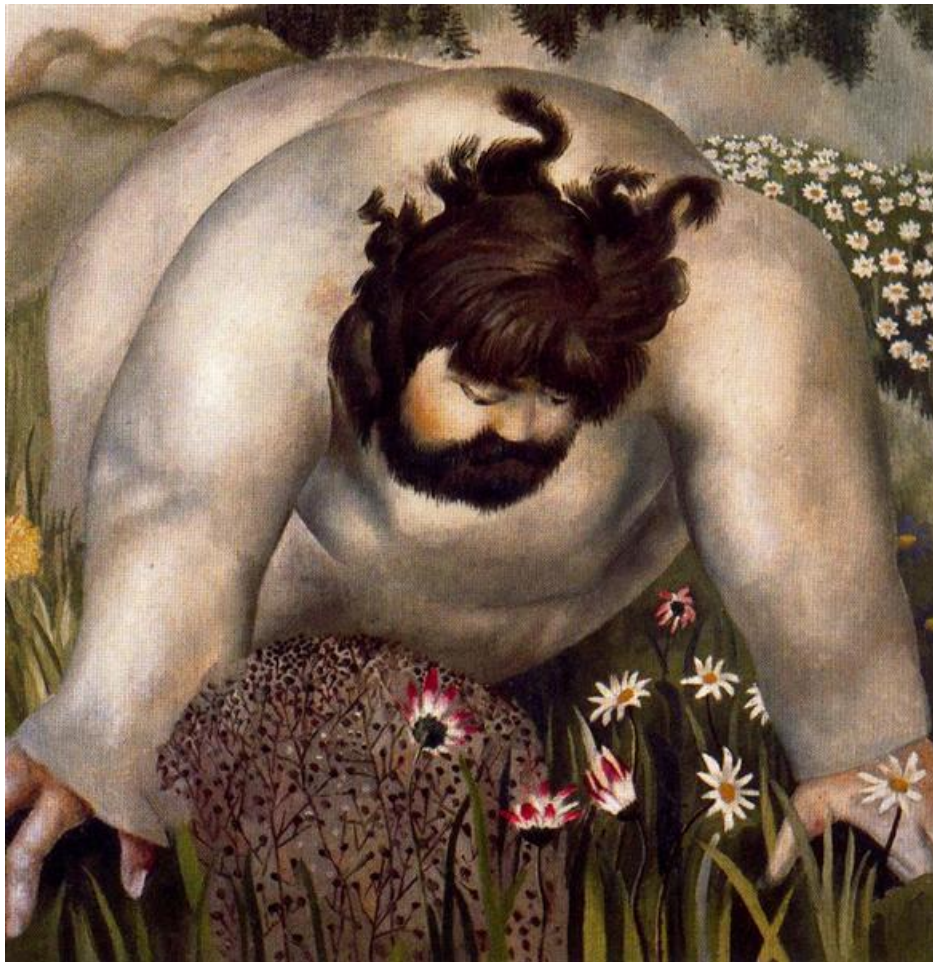


The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Laetare Sunday + March 30, 2025 + 4pm



Christ in the Wilderness - Stanley Spencer; Fair Use



**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



**CEASE
FIRE
NOW**

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.

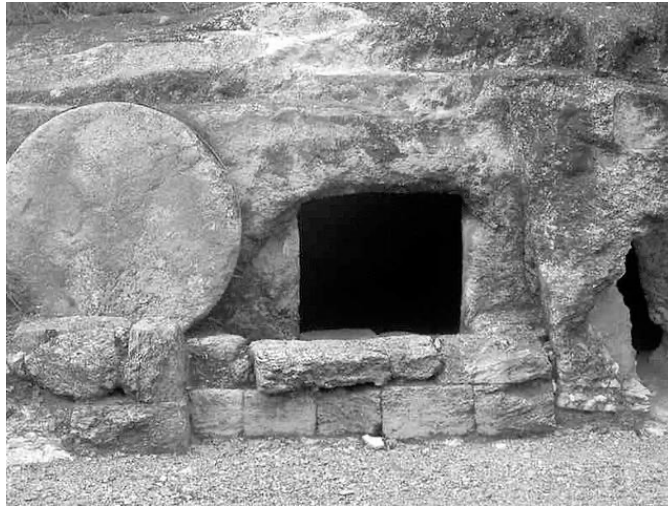
We invite diversity in our community and our leadership; old, young, rich, poor, conservative, liberal, radical, single, married, LGBTQ2IA+, straight, evangelical, progressive, overeducated, undereducated, overhoused, underhoused, certain, doubting, hurting, thriving (to name a few).

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 Lək'wəḡən 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

It's Laetare! Laetare Sunday is the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent in the Western Christian liturgical calendar. Traditionally, this Sunday has been a day of celebration within the austere period of Lent. This Sunday gets its name from the first few words of the traditional Latin entrance verse (Introit) for the day. "Laetare Jerusalem" ("Rejoice, O Jerusalem") is from Isaiah 66:10. Laetare is also known as

Mothering Sunday and Refreshment Sunday... The Sunday is considered a day of relaxation from normal Lenten rigours; a day of hope with Easter at last within sight. Traditionally, weddings (otherwise banned during Lent) could be performed on this day, and servants were released from service for the day to visit their mother church, the place in which they received the sacrament of baptism (hence the name 'Mothering Sunday'). Adapted from Wikipedia

Tolling of the Bells

Gathering Words

In times of fear and violence:

The people of God resist and say: 'we will rejoice'.

In the face of facism, war and genocide, *we* say:

We will not comply to cultures of death

Followers of Jesus the Lord of all, we will not let death have the final say:

We must dance - and worship the almighty - and rejoice!

Followers of the Christ - in Jesus' name we claim authority over principalities and powers:

And, in love and in resistance, we rejoice!

We will make home for those who are pushed out and who live in fear

For those who have no home - take sanctuary here - for there is a feast waiting.

We gather in the name of the Triune God, +Source of all, Jesus the Christ and the Holy Spirit

Who was and is and ever shall be.

All empires rise and they also fall. And so I rejoiced when they said to me:

Let us go into God's house. Let us rejoice! Amen. RJS

*Children and youth help set the table and then are warmly invited to join our leaders in
AbbeyKids and youth!*

Opening Song: Up Above My Head

Up above my head (Up above my head) I hear music in the air (I hear music in the air)

Up above my head (Up above my head) I hear music in the air (I hear music in the air)

Up above my head (Up above my head) I hear music in the air (I hear music in the air)

And I really do believe (Yeah) I really do believe

There's Joy somewhere (There's Joy somewhere)

All around this place (all around this place) I hear music in the air (I hear music in the air) x3

I really do believe (Yeah) I really do believe There's Joy right here (There's Joy right here)

All over the world (all over the world) I hear music in the air (music in the air) x3

I really do believe (Yeah) I really do believe There's Joy right here (There's Joy right here)

African-American Spiritual / Sr. Rosetta Tharpe / Public domain.

The Poem - "The Prodigal's Mother Speaks to God," by Allison Funk - selected and
Read by Rebecca Yeo, Poet-in-Residence.

We Proclaim

The Psalm: Psalm 32

As we chant the Psalm, you are welcomed to join in or let these ancient words flow over you:

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,* whose sin is covered.
Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity* and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
While I kept silent, my body wasted away* through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;*
 my strength was dried up] as by the heat of summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin to you,* and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"* and you forgave the guilt of my sin.
Therefore let all who are faithful* offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters* shall not reach them.
You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble;*
 you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.
I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;*
 I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,*
 whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.
Many are the torments of the wicked*
 but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.
Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous*
 and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.
...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.

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Godself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to God's self, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making God's appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

*(NRSVUE 5:16-21) ...The Word of the Lord - **Thanks be to God.***

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.

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So Jesus told them this parable: There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’ So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. “Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’” (NRSVUE 15: 1-3, 11-32)

Let us proclaim the gospel from the rooftops. **With our words and with our lives!**

Sermon

Matt Humphrey

Bell. Silence for reflection. Bell.

Please rise in body or in spirit as we affirm our faith:

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.

(continued on next page)

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

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). CCLI

Absolution

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

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: How Can I Keep From Singing

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation,
I catch the sweet, tho' far-off hymn
That hails a new creation;
Thro' all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?

What tho' my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Saviour liveth;
What tho' the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it,
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing;
All things are mine since I am his—
How can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble in their fear,
And hear their death-knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near,
How can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile,
Our thoughts to them go winging;
When friends by shame are undefiled,
How can I keep from singing?

Words: "Pauline T" verse 4 Doris Plenn - Public Domain.
Tune: Rev. Robert Lowry

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 and joyful hearts, with open hands. Amen

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

The Great Thanksgiving / The Most Holy Eucharist

The Lord 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!...
...justice that would never fail.
Glory to you forever and ever.

...Therefore with the company of heaven and all of 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)

...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, or Abba, or Amma, or Source, or Mother)

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. Please ask the server if you would like a non-dairy / nut option (rice cracker). 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: Jesus Feed Us

Again and again and again

To this table we come

Once a people estranged

Now as one in your name

In your mercy and grace

Forgiven of what we've confessed

By your body and blood

One last thing we request:

To you we pray Jesus feed us

Feed us Jesus

Feed us Jesus - With your healing love.

Gord Johnson. St. Benedict's Table. CCLI

Song: Underneath the Shadow of Your Wings

Underneath the shadow of your wings

We dwell underneath the shadow of your wings *(repeat)*

Hidden close to thee. We find rest.

Tom Wuest. Brass Trumpet Publishing

Prayer after Communion

(Let us pray together) **We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world united in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Friend and Saviour. Amen.** Celebrate God's Presence - UCC.

We Are Sent

The Blessing

Closing Song: You Shall Go Out With Joy (Isaiah 55)

You shall go out with joy and be let forth with peace -
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you
There'll be shouts of joy And all the trees of the fields - will clap, will clap their hands.
And all the trees of the fields will clap their hands (x x)
And all the trees of the fields will clap their hands (x x)
The trees of the fields will clap their hands (x x)... While you go out with joy
Stuart Daeuermann / OneLicense / Hope Publishing / Voices United

The Sending

Go in joy and 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 their street family. This is the last week for a while as they seek renewed funding for the project.*

Holy Week – Save the date!

Wednesday April 16th – 7:00pm Tenebrae, service of Holy Darkness
in the way of Taize (with Fairfield United)

Thursday April 17th – 6:00pm Maundy Thursday Supper Church/Potluck
With Holy Eucharist and optional foot/hand washing

Friday April 18th – 10:00am Good Friday worship
(with Fairfield United and the Place Community Church)

Sunday April 20th – 5:45am Easter Sunday Sunrise
(meet at Willows Beach for worship and a breakfast potluck)

Sunday April 20th – 4:00pm Easter Sunday Worship

Other Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, **April 2 - Lenten Book Study:** The Gift of Tears (12, 13, 14)
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

Our Partnership with QomQem: Last Week (for now)

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 (once it starts to cool)
- Tins of hot chocolate powder
- Sweet treats like pre wrapped Rice Krispie squares, wagon wheels, ding dongs etc
 - Fruit cups
- Flavoured Apple sauce cups
- 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



NON PERISHABLE FOOD URGENTLY NEEDED!

WE NEED YOU!

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

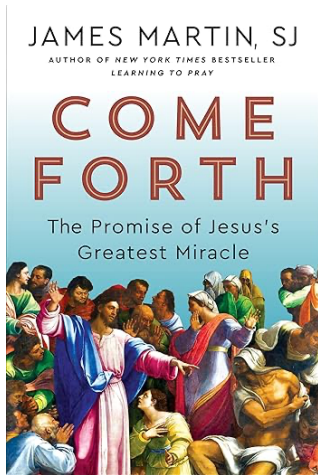
Camp gear!



TO ARRANGE DROP OFF, CONTACT:

admin@qomqem.com / 250-291-1204

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 for collection. Thanks for any help you can be in this amazing work.



Lenten Book Group - get your copy today!

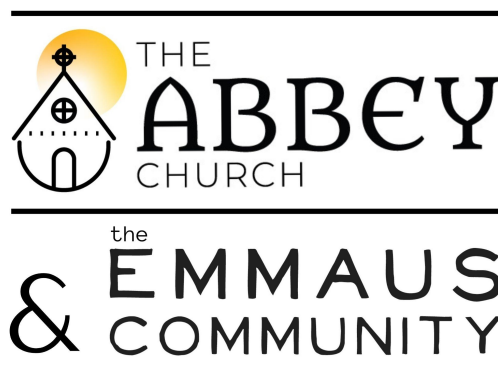
Join Matt for a journey through Jesus' encounter with Lazarus! We will read *Come Forth* by James Martin, SJ, and focus in on a few key moments. 6:45 we gather for tea and discussion, closing at 8pm with a brief evening prayer/examen, and departing by 8:15.

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)

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.



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

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