

Immanuel United Church  
Second Sunday of Lent  
March 5th, 2023

## **PRELUDE**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LAND AND TREATIES**

Today, we acknowledge the land that we are gathered on is Treaty 1 territory..... the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, and Dakota Peoples, as well as the homeland and the heart of the Metis Nation, who for thousands of years, walked gently on this land with deeply rooted gifts of spirituality, culture and ways of knowing.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and give thanks for the connection we share with this land – in times past and also in the present day.

Today we are called to seek a new relationship as Indigenous and non-indigenous people, creating one based on friendship, built on respect, and one that produces peace, remembering that we are all treaty people.

*As we enter this time of worship,  
we acknowledge the Christ candle, marking the presence of light in our midst,  
and the Rainbow Candle, symbolizing that we are an inclusive and affirming  
community, and all belong here.*

## **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **OPENING STATEMENT AND PRAYER**

Last week we introduced our Lenten theme of Lessons from the Wilderness. We also introduced our Lenten Words lesson. Each week, we will have a word that is inspired by the story and we will try to see how with the help of Jesus' teaching, we can change the word into something more positive and beneficial for ourselves and our world.

This week our first word is familiar. Oh how we love the familiar. It is comforting and soothing, like a warm blanket on a cold night. But the familiar can also be stifling. With the familiar, nothing changes, everything stays the same and we are not challenged to think in new and exciting ways. Instead of trying something

new, we carry on with the old because that is how we have always done it. If we cling too much to what is familiar, we are not challenged to grow and we stagnate.

Jesus came to shake up the familiar. He championed a new relationship with God and challenged his followers to open themselves to the Unknown. It is scary to venture into the unknown and it is so tempting to stick with the familiar, but deep down, we know we must take the steps toward the unknown because the status quo is not a viable option. Here at Immanuel, we are taking steps towards something new and different and what that will look like is unknown. It is an uncertain time and we are in an unfamiliar place but we know that God is with us. We know that we are trying to follow the path of Jesus and when we do this we are never alone. The steps to the unknown are easier when we are moving forward together.

Let us pray:

**During this time of Lent, open our eyes and hearts to your beautiful world that surrounds us. Help us to trust that following your way is the path that we should be on. Lead us as we venture into the unknown.**

**AMEN**

**HYMN:** VU# 108 Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights (vs 1-4)

**MOMENT TO PONDER:**

Author Elizabeth O'Connor told the story of a Christian community organized around two spiritual journeys—the interior one toward knowing our true self and knowing God, and the one directed outward into the world to enact God's justice and love. [1] These two movements comprise the way of Jesus, a continual flow of breath: in, out; in, out; in, out....

This quest is a mapless journey—there is no single road—the only guides to it are nature, saints, poetry, song, and Spirit. When you dare leave the map behind, Jesus emerges as the road itself and the Light that guides. The Quakers refer to this as the “inner light”; medieval mystics speak of Jesus likewise. Of it Meister Eckhart wrote: “There is a journey you must take. It is a journey without

destination. There is no map. Your soul will lead you. And you can take nothing with you.” [2] Conventional Christianity (of many different denominations) prefers to see Jesus as a directive or destination rather than this path; for them “way” is a noun, not a verb. On the mapless journey, however, all is movement. There is no destination, only the enveloping presence of love.

**HYMN:** VU# 633 Bless Now, O God, the Journey

**SCRIPTURE:**

Genesis 12:1-4a  
John 3:1-17

**CHOIR ANTHEM:** “O Holy Spirit” (Kyrie Eleison)~*Aasta Tsai - flute*

**REFLECTION:**

**HYMN:** VU# 121 Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery (vs 1,2,3,5)

**OFFERING INVITATION AND PRAYER**

Many of us know Lent as a time of giving up, of fasting from the excess of everyday life so we can search for what is essential. These days the world is guiding us in the way of the essential. We are learning again to open our hearts to the Joy and Pain of living and dying.

Come, let us receive gratefully, and give freely, and live fully.

**Doxology** VU# 541 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

Let us pray:

**Creator God, receive what we offer, our hearts, our lives, everything, may we understand sacrifice the way you do, and follow Jesus without reserve.**

**AMEN**

## **COMMUNITY PRAYERS**

### **LORD'S PRAYER - SUNG**

**HYMN:** VU # 703 In the Bulb There Is a Flower

Blessing

Choral Amen

Postlude