

St. James United Church

First Sunday of Lent

February 22, 2026
10:30 am

Worship Leaders:
Sara Scarfe and John Hennigar-Shuh



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St. James United Church

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First Sunday of Lent - February 22, 2026

Welcome

Welcome and thank you for joining in our worship this morning! We hope you feel at home in our midst. Today we begin the Season of Lent, a time of deep reflection about who we are, whose we are, and where we are. Let us pause to remember that in this region we live and work and worship on sacred land that has been the site of human activity for over 12,000 years. We are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. May we live with respect for this land, and in peace and friendship with its people.

The Life and Work of St. James United Church

Birthday/Anniversary Song

Happy birthday/anniversary to you, to Jesus be true,
may God's richest blessings abide unto you.

Lighting the Christ Candle

The light of Christ shines in the darkness.
May that light fill our hearts and our world.

Introit (MV 18)

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true;
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Call to Worship

Today is our first Sunday of Lent.
We walk the rocky road of challenge and blessing.
Who are we following?
We follow Jesus, our teacher, companion and friend.
Let us pray:

Opening Prayer of Confession (together)

Gracious God, we want to live by your words of life, to trust in your promises, but we are often seduced by the siren song that says we can live by bread alone. We pay attention to the voices that tell us we need nothing except a credit card with a high limit and a shopping mall spread before us. We feast on emptiness and wonder why we are not satisfied. O God, forgive us. Teach us how to find in you the life that is full and deep and true. Give us courage for the long haul and hope that will shelter us in times of despair. Make us disciples who do not give in to the temptation to trust in material wealth, power and prestige. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(By John Moses, *Gathering, Lent/Easter 2020*, page 35. Used with permission.)

Hymn VU 567 "Will You Come and Follow Me"

Lenten Candles

(Light six purple candles.)

Called into the wilderness, into the place of searching and temptation...how will we find our way out?

God is always with us, even in the shadow places.

Let us journey through the shadows toward the light.

(Extinguish a purple candle)

Sung response (MV 85):

Take, O take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

Invitation to the Offering

Offering Hymn (MV 79)

Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart

Prayer of Dedication (together)

With these gifts we offer ourselves as well, O Lord. Use our hands, our feet and our voices to share your love and healing in the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Responsive Psalm 32 VU 759

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

Anthem

Sermon:

Hymn: VU 115 "Jesus, Tempted in the Desert"

"A New Creed" (VU 918)

Please remain standing as we confess our faith in the words of "A New Creed." *(Following this, the people may be seated.)*

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Leader: Dearly Beloved, in the name of Jesus Christ I invite to this meal all who love and follow Jesus.

People: We remember that Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry; whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Leader: As the Lord Jesus, on the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, I take these elements of bread and wine to be set apart from all common uses, to this holy use and mystery.

People: And as he gave thanks, let us draw near to God and present our prayers and thanksgivings.

Leader: Creator God, you made this wonderful world for us to live in. You showed us how to care for it and take care of each other. We thank you and praise you.

People: You gave us Jesus to be our friend and to bring us closer to you. He died on a cross, but you brought him to life, to live with us forever.

Leader: You send us your Spirit and bring us to the table. For all your goodness we give you thanks and praise.

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, power of life and love! Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Leader: In this Lenten time we worship and bless your name.

People: We proclaim Christ's death, celebrate Christ's resurrection, and await Christ's coming again.

Leader: Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here, that we may be signs of life and love to each other and to the world.

People: At this time, we remember those with whom you would have us share your feast. We pray for all who are sad or in pain; all who are sick or alone; all who are hungry or afraid.

Leader: We pray for the nations as they strive for peace; for the earth and all its creatures; for our families and friends. Loving God, we ask that you hold these people in your love:
(*prayers of the people*). Let us pray as Jesus taught.

All: Our Father, 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, and 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.

Leader: Now we do as Jesus did the night before he died. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it (*break bread*), gave it to his disciples and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Leader: After supper he took a cup of wine (*pour wine into cup*) and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Sharing the Meal: People of all ages and backgrounds are welcome to take part in communion. It will be served in the pews. The bread is served first: please keep it until everyone has been served and we will then eat it together. We use juice for the cup. Everyone will be served; we will then drink together.

After bread is distributed: "Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life."

After juice is distributed: "Jesus Christ, the Cup of Blessing."

Leader: We thank you, O God, for the bread we have eaten, the wine we have tasted, the life we have received.

People: May what we have done and been given today remain in our hearts. Send us forth, O God, in faith, hope and love. Amen.

Hymn: VU 641 "Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song"

Benediction

Song for the Journey (VU 117 v. 5)

Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,
"Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet."
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me; I will follow you.

The Life and Work of St. James United Church

Ghost Island Documentary will be shown in the church hall on Sat March 7 from 1pm to 3:30pm.

65th Wedding Anniversary: Bill and Fran Stewart are celebrating their 65th year wedding anniversary and welcome everyone to join them in the church hall on Sat Feb 28th from 1pm onwards. In lieu of gifts, donations may be made to the Food Bank

St. James Dinner Theatre presents "The Haunting of Sambo Island", April 24, 25, 26, May 1, 2. As always, this show features a 3 Course Lobster Dinner, an original and entertaining show, and lots of great music! Auction items at each show.

Tickets go on sale March 8th, \$50.00

<https://tinyurl.com/sambo2026> Or

https://www.zeffy.com/en_CA/ticketing/the-haunting-of-sambo-island-st-james-united-church-sambo-dinner-theatre--2026