



## Minister's Message — Annual Meeting 2024

I am so glad that Jesus loves me,  
Jesus loves me even me.

Though I forget him and wander away,  
Still he doth love me wherever I stray;  
Back to his dear loving arms do I flee,  
When I remember that Jesus loves me.

I am so glad that Jesus loves me,  
Jesus loves even me.

### Grace & Peace to You, Dear Friends in Christ,

This beloved hymn, “**Jesus Loves Even Me**” was a favourite of Ola Brown, a dear friend of many of us. It reminds us of the Good News of the Gospel: God does love us. God is always with us and God is always for us. It is also true that God is Holy Mystery. In Karen Armstrong’s book, entitled The Case For God, she says: “The task of religion is to help us live peacefully, joyously, creatively with realities for which there are no easy explanations. We cannot explain all that happens in our human condition. An active faith takes dedication and discipline—spiritual practices each day, to live a compassionate lifestyle (where we love our neighbour as ourself). Our faith enables us to break out of the prism of selfhood.”

The message of the Gospel is straightforward: **God loves you.** Jesus tells us this over and over in all his stories and parables.

We are now in the season of EPIPHANY. This translates easily into AHA! The 3 wise men recognized Jesus as the Messiah: the One anointed by God to tell us the Word. In this season we light many candles as we are reminded that Jesus is the “Light of the World” Jesus also calls us to be the Light: “Let your light shine before others that they will see your good works and glorify God who is in heaven and on earth.” (Mt 5:16)

Both Wabash & Bothwell United Churches have been shining God’s light quite brightly this past year. Here are some of the highlights:

In Wabash, our deep thanks to Dan Sinasac and his wife Joyce and our deep thanks to Connie and Dave (posthumously) Martin for their constant devotion to Wabash United –a very sacred spot in CK. They are soon retiring from “active duty”. Connie has promised to stay on for the year. All of them certainly will continue to teach us how to spread the “Good News” of the gospel of Jesus.

One of the highlights at Wabash was the construction of the ramp at the front of our church. Our thanks to Josh and the Martin family for making this a reality.

Another highlight is the attendance of some new people this year. Judy duff, Betty Webster, Ken and Evelyn Howe (and I hope that there will be others) have “officially” joined with us. It is exciting that our congregation is growing.

We continue to thank Anne, Nina, Ruthie, Karen and their team that continue to provide lessons for so many of our children. Also, we commend those who are now coming out in person for the Sunday service. Hopefully the viruses will stay away and others will be able to attend. God blesses all of you!

Our thanks to all the readers at both churches & thank you to Terry Smith and Sharon Boylan who present the Minute for Mission each month.

At Bothwell on Easter Sunday, Vanessa Benoit was baptized. Our thanks to Sharon Stevens, Rosilla Elliott, Joyce Sinasac who gave of their time to be a discernment team to help listen to Vanessa & also tell their stories of faith. May God continue to bless you, Vanessa on your faith journey. We pray that we all continue to grow in our faith and know the power of God in our lives.

One of the most memorable services at both Wabash & Bothwell was the Pentecost service. Cherie Elliott Pegg was the guest speaker at both services. She told of her faith journey & how God was with her to give her strength & courage throughout all the cancer treatments. Her message of hope, prayer & healing was so very inspiring. Her text was Matthew 7:7-8 “Seek, Ask, Knock. God bless you, Cherie!

We continue to be blessed to have Sharon Stevens at our excellent organist and pianist. She always selects special music to go with the scriptures of the day.

At Bothwell we thank Clare, Larry, Eva, Lisa & Rosilla for their beautiful voices that continue to enrich our worship services as we sing “Glory to God”.

For certain, one of the most Spirit-filled services of 2023 was the Christmas Eve service. Our thanks to all the participants & to the many who attended. Our gratitude to Marlain Wolfe as she skillfully directed & acted in the play, “Looking For Jesus”.

Our thanks also to Patty Walters & Karen Balazsity who faithfully provision the Caring Cupboard in Bothwell. And thank you to all you continue to bring in items &/or money to make this outreach possible.

Also in Bothwell, there were 2 successful Broasted Chicken Take-outs –in May and then again in September. Thank you to Patty Walters & her team for making that possible. We do appreciate all your efforts. The fund-raisers are needed to keep our churches “perking along”.

We had 3 successful Friendship Meals under the direction of Kathy Shailer & her daughter Vanessa Benoit. It was so wonderful that many volunteered to help & many came out to give good vibes for fellowship with friends, neighbours & new arrivals too.

I thank all our leaders and participants. The list is long: readers & greeters, treasurers, UCW, Sunday School helpers, Bible Study, Outreach Committee, church councils, worship committee, Joyce & Marlain who send cards, food preparers, cleaners & those who fix and repair, those who remove snow and keep our buildings functionable, those who phone & visit, and all who pray. God blesses you for your good works!

Also a special thank you to Joanne Lewinsky who is faithful in the office each week. She keeps me “on track” and all of us benefit from her expertise. We are indeed blessed by her capable talents.

Jesus said: “You have not chosen me, I have chosen you”. (John 15:6)

As we begin this New Year, let us rejoice in this Good News: you are the “beloved” of God. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Be at peace.

Yours in Christ’s service,

With love & blessings to you & your dear-ones,

*Annalee*



## **Like A Healing Stream**

1) Like a healing stream in a barren desert,  
Spirit water bringing life to dusty earth,  
God is trickling through our lives  
as in a dream unfolding  
promising revival and rebirth---like a healing stream.

2) Like a mighty sea reaching far horizons,  
Spirit water with a love both deep and wide,  
God is working in our hearts  
to shape a new tomorrow:  
God will always challenge and provide!

Like a mighty sea, like a river strong,  
like a gentle rain, like a healing stream.