

Sunday, February 22, 2026  
How Does Your Garden Grow?  
Lent 1

Opening Responses

Loosely based on Psalm 32 by Rev. Darryl Macdonald

Mary Mary, quite contrary,  
How does your garden grow?

**With covered sins, transgressions forgiven,  
and steadfast love all in a row.**

**Song**

Tree Of Life And Awesome Mystery **VU121 vv.1-3 & 1st Sunday**  
Tree of Life and awesome mystery,

In your death we are reborn;  
Though you die in all of history,  
Still you rise with every morn,  
Still you rise with every morn.

Seed that dies to rise in glory,  
May we see ourselves in you,  
If we learn to live your story  
We may die to rise anew,  
We may die to rise anew.

We remember truth once spoken,  
Love passed on through act and word,  
Every person lost and broken  
Wears the body of our Lord,  
Wears the body of our Lord.

From the dawning of creation,  
You have loved us as your own;  
Stay with us through our temptation,  
Make us turn to you alone,  
Make us turn to you alone.

#### A Time of Centring

Take this moment to centre yourself deeply in the love of God  
and prepare yourself for an encounter with the Holy.

Begin with your breath.

Feel the air pass your nostrils and glide down your throat to fill your lungs.

Drop your diaphragm and let your belly and back expand.

Notice the rhythm of your breathing, and the spaces between your breath.

The air you breathe is sacred for it is the breath of God.

Your body is sacred for it manifests the Holy One in substance and form.

Be aware of your body and how you are sitting.

Let your hands fall open and your feet feel grounded.

Ask of God what you need at this moment and give space for the response.

#### Reflection

*Wendell Berry*

The ecological teaching of the Bible is simply inescapable: God made the world because He wanted it made. He thinks the world is good, and He loves it. It is His world; He has never relinquished title to it. And He has never revoked the conditions, bearing on His gift to us of the use of it, that oblige us to take excellent care of it. If God loves the world, then how might any person of faith be excused for not loving it or justified in destroying it?

Take some time to reflect on your relationship with God, the world, your sacred centre.

Honour your connection to God's creation.

Offer something of yourself.

Be open to receiving God's gift to you this day.

Now, return to your body.

Imagine there is a light that softly glows from your heart, through your limbs and head, and radiates out into the world, connecting with people, animals, fish and birds, with water, soil and even rock, and give thanks to God for the experience of life.

#### Song

When We Are Tested **MV65**

#### Scripture

Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition.  
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15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the

middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.' ” 4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die, 5 for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

#### Another Voice

*by Robin Wall Kimmerer from The Serviceberry*

Enumerating the gifts you've received creates a sense of abundance, the knowing that you already have what you need. Recognizing "enoughness" is a radical act in an economy that is always urging us to consume more. Data tell the story that there are "enough" food calories on the planet for all 8 billion of us to be nourished. And yet people are starving.

Imagine the outcome if we each took only enough, rather than far more than our share. The wealth and security we seem to crave could be met by sharing what we have. Ecopsychologists have shown that the practice of gratitude puts brakes on hyperconsumption. The relationships nurtured by gift thinking diminish our sense of scarcity and want. In that climate of sufficiency, our hunger for more abates and we take only what we need, in respect for the generosity of the giver. Climate catastrophe and biodiversity loss are the consequences of unrestrained taking by humans. Might cultivation of gratitude be part of the solution?

#### Song

O God, How We Have Wandered **VU112**

#### Reflection

How Does Your Garden Grow?

#### Offering Time

#### Musical Offering

Lift Every Voice And Sing by James Weldon Johnson  
*performed by Karen Gordon*

#### What Membership Means To Me

Charles & Carol Paradis

When did you become a member of Roxboro United Church?

What does being a member mean for you?

What about the United Church of Canada is meaningful for you?

Why do you like about the worship here?

What is your favourite activity in Roxboro?

#### Offering Song

Come In, Come In And Sit Down **VU365**

Invitation

Isaiah 25.6-9 *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition.*

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On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,  
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.  
And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the covering that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever.  
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the Lord has spoken.  
It will be said on that day,  
“See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.  
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Song

Now Quit Your Care **VU109**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Sacred Gardener, we come to your table for you have invited us,  
as you have invited all the saints.  
The sacred story tells us that table fellowship was an essential part of Jesus' ministry,  
and he sat at many tables with different people.  
It all started when he was placed in a feeding trough when he was born  
and was visited by shepherds and magi.  
He later attended a wedding where he made the best wine out of water  
and told his mother to be in the moment.  
He sat at Peter's table where Peter's mother-in-law made sure that all were well fed  
after Jesus gave her another lease on life.  
He invited himself to the table of Zacchaeus  
where he praised the tax collector's generosity.  
He dined with a Pharisee where a woman broke open  
an expensive bottle of perfume and anointed Jesus,  
who then told us to remember her love poured out.  
He held a picnic and thousands were filled to the brim,  
showing us that the earth is filled with the Creator's abundance.  
He hosted a final meal in an upstairs room  
where he shared bread and wine and asked us to remember him.

Welcoming Host, you spread a table before us; the Great Feast of Heaven,  
where the invitation is open to all, with no conditions  
except that we sit at table as we are able.

**We see you as the host and the guest, the familiar and the stranger.**

**You bless us with your presence, your awakening of love.**

As hosts with Christ,

**we bless and break our bread.**

As guests with Christ,

**we pour and share our wine.**

As welcomed strangers, united in Christ's life, death,  
and embodied liberation, we hear these sacred, simple words:

Jesus shared bread and said: take and eat to remember me.

Jesus poured wine and said: take and drink to remember me.

**Living Ground of all being, we remember.**

Breathe your Spirit into us, the bread, the wine, and into the very fabric of creation.

Restore and heal all that is wounded,

be present in the stillness of the waiting,

shine your light on our prejudice and fear,

release in us the signs of hope and love.

Prayer Circle

*Free prayers for those who need our prayers*

Alan, Angela, Barbara, Dot, Jim, Judy, Karen, Levi, Mark, Rona, Ronda, Rudy, Russell, Shannon,  
Shawn, Steve, Valerie, Yvonne

The Lord's Prayer

(A Paraphrase) VU916

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,**

**Source of all that is and that shall be.**

**Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!**

**The way of your justice be followed by peoples of the world!**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom**

**sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In time of temptation and test, strengthen us.**

**From trials too great to endure, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.**

Breaking And Pouring

We gently break this bread of sacred life;

**our breaking down becomes our breaking through.**

We freely pour this wine of embodied love;

**our pouring out becomes our 'flowing with'.**

As we eat this living bread and drink the new wine of resurrection,

**we celebrate the abundance of the Great Feast of Heaven spread out for all.**

Communion

God, with divine tenderness, you remake us;

by transforming pain, you heal us - your passionate energy is our sacred centre.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Prayer After Communion

After Jesus was crucified, and the disciples went back to fishing,

Jesus appeared on the shore of Galilee and served them fish on a campfire.

**Jesus, who fasted and prayed in the desert**

**continue to dine with us**

**and feed us with the food we need:**

**hope and wisdom, healing and awareness, love and trust.**

Song

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace **VU265**

Closing Responses

*by Rev. Darryl Macdonald*

Creator God, walking in the garden

**Breathe life into us.**

Gardening God, planting and tending.

**Feed us with your abundance.**

Tending God, delighting in your creation

**Assure us that we have all we need.**

Music To Send Us On Our Way

I'll Fly Away, by Albert E. Brumley  
*performed by The Band*