**but lasting love:
love that’s there when the sweetness has gone: love that endures beyond the barrier of pain.**

**Forgive us
for worshipping the idols of perfection,
for failing to see your glory in the vulnerable, for attaching more worth to the seen than the unseen.**

**Forgive us
for being so full of our own importance that we cannot do the one thing needful.**

**Forgive us
our lack of perseverance
in the face of failure, doubt, rejection; our failure to make connections between politics and health, economics and healing.**

**Vulnerable Love-giver,
Christ, wounded healer,
Holy Spirit, compassionate friend, grant us a new heart; love in all its fullness. Amen.**

Assurance: ✯

We affirm **that we are made in God’s image,**

**befriended by Christ, empowered by the Spirit.**

We affirm **God’s goodness at the heart of humanity planted more deeply than all that is wrong**

We celebrate **the miracle and wonder of life,
the unfolding purposes of God
for ever at work in ourselves and the world.**

**ENGAGE**

Reading from Hebrew Scriptures: *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

Gospel Reading: *John 12:20 - 33*

Sermon/Message

Hymn: “Spirit, Open My Heart” MV #79

**RESPONSE**

Minute for Mission:

Presentation of the Offering:

 Doxology: “What Can I Do” MV #191

 Offertory Prayer: **\*\***

**Loving God, open our hearts to a new world. A world where there is no longer least and greatest, rich and poor. A world where there is enough for all, and all treated as beloved children of God. Until that day comes, bless our small contributions of time, talent and treasures and may they work towards the building of your new world. Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer: **\*\*\***

God of the heights and the depths, we bring to you
those driven into the desert,
those struggling with difficult decisions.

**May they choose life.**

God of the light and the darkness, we bring to you
those lost in the mist of drugs or drink, those dazzled by the use of power.

**May they choose life.**

God of the wild beast and the ministering angel,

we bring to you
those savaged by others’ greed,
those exhausted by caring for others.

**May they feel your healing touch.**

Christ tempted and triumphant,

we bring ourselves to you,
tired of difficult choices,
anxious about the future,
drained by the loss of a loved one.

**May we feel your healing touch,**

**May we know your strengthening presence,**

**May we live and love with a renewed heart,**

**May we be the love this world needs. Amen.**

Hymn: “We Are Pilgrims” VU #595

Commissioning and Benediction: **\***

Go and embody God’s song to the world.

With your words, sing hope.

With your actions, dance peace.

With your being, play love.

**Amen.**

Postlude

**\* *from SeasonsFUSION, Lent, March 21, 2021***

***\*\* from Prayers to Share: Year B by David Sparks, pg. 72***

**\*\*\* adapted *from Not for the Faint-Hearted by Kate McIIhagga, © 2004 Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK***

✯ ***adapted from Iona Abbey Worship Book pg. 65, © 2016 The Iona Community, Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK***

United Church

Sunday March 21, 2021

5th Sunday of Lent

**GATHER**

Prelude

Greeting, Announcements, and Meditation

Call to Worship: **\*\***

You will be our God, and we will be your people.

**In times of weakness, in moments of temptation, the covenant holds.**

You will be our God, and we will be your people.

**When the journey is rough, when friends let us down, the covenant holds.**

You will be our God, and we will be your people.

**In our struggle to be a faithful community, in the uncertainty of faithful endeavours, the covenant holds.**

You will be our God, and we will be your people.

**In our work for justice, in our response of worship, the covenant is proved. You will be our God, and we will be your people.**

Hymn: “Behold, Behold, I Make All Things New” MV #115

Time With Children/Learning Together

Prayer of Confession: \*\*\*

**God, love-giver, the love that dares to speak out,
the love that listens, the love that heals,
the love found most powerfully in weakness;
this is the love we need and long for,
not counterfeit pretty love, tied with bows,**