**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2024**

**SEASON OF EASTER - THIRD SUNDAY**

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES –** *(first light the three pillars)*

The light of these candles is a reflection of the light that brightens these northern lands at this time of year, a reminder of the turning of the earth and the turning of the seasons, which are in such contrast in our latitudes. This light is a light of presence, this light is a light of clarity, this light is a light of hope.

*(The Christ light is lit)*

This light is the Christ light among us.

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Welcome to Covenant United Church …

 A special thank you to our coffee hour volunteers each month! Our coffee in May will be coffee & Sundae Sunday, hosted by Rob & Joy Galloway on May 12th. June is our Sunday School Promotion & Wrap-up hosted by Veronica Renken & Heather Laverdiere. We are looking for volunteers to host the coffee hour. If you are willing to help, please contact Heather.

 Office hours are Wednesday from 9:00 – 3:30.

WOW (Women on Wednesdays) will be meeting on April 17th at 11:45 am at the Mac. Please call the office or let Heather or Veronica know if you plan on attending so we can plan accordingly.

 Prayer Shawl will be on April 18th from 1:00 until 3:00. All are welcome.

AGM will be held on April 21st beginning at 10:30 am.

**Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization has passed.** What happens now? The decision on enacting the remit will take place at the Annual Meeting of General Council, on October 19, 2024. When the remit has been enacted, the change will be included in the next edition of The Manual.

***Becoming and Anti-racist Church***
 Join a community of people from across the church who are exploring anti-racist practices! Together, and with themes from the book [*Wait—Is This Racist? A Guide to Becoming an Anti-Racist Church*](https://churchx.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ff2087d5fde243a770ed893a8&id=5b0e6b07fb&e=4641c67e8f), we will explore practical ways of co-creating anti-racist congregations.

Covenant United has purchased the series (from a donation) and will host the series of 6 presentations starting April 22, 2024 until May 13, 2025. The series comes with the book ‘Wait – is this Racist?’ which will be available for loan. The first presentation will be at 7 pm on April 22nd at the church via zoom (will be recorded too). Bring your ideas – how we can work towards being an anti-racist church. For further information contact: Joy

You are welcome to light a candle before the service, or during the Introit in memory or in celebration. God is with us. We are not alone.

 (the ringing of the chime)

**EASTER INTROIT –** VU# 958 Helle, Halle, Halle! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFQQS6CRh3E>

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Halle, halle, hallelujah! (Hallelujah!)

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

**ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND AND PEOPLE –**

Today we acknowledge that we are meeting on Land that is part of the Canadian Shield, and is fed by the waters of the Arctic Watershed. Our on-going relationship with the land and with our neighbours, both Indigenous and Others will determine life for future generations on this planet.

**We hope that reminding ourselves of this will help us to be aware, when there are things we can do that are faithful, and helpful. We pray for the humility that is needed as we live into an ever-deepening respect for the Creator, the land, our treaty partners and all living beings.**

**TIME WITH GOD’S CHILDREN –** Scripture: Luke 24:36-48 – Learning To Be A Witness For Jesus – *Written by Nathanael Vissia*

**CHILDREN’S HYMN –**VU #340 Jesus, Friend of Little Children <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTtG4pIey28>

Jesus, friend of little children,

let me be one too;

take my hand, and ever keep me

close to you.

Teach me how to grow in goodness,

daily as I grow.

You have been a child, and surely

you must know.

Never leave me, nor forsake me;

ever be my friend;

for I need you, from life’s dawning

to its end.

**PRAYERS OF APPROACH -** *(written by Bob Root for the gathering)*

Holy One, you call us from the rest of the night into the light of this new day.

**You invite us to live in the light of love for your sake and for the good of all our relations.**

**As we worship you now,**

**take from us any impediments that keep us from loving you with heart and soul and mind and strength.**

**Be our Good Shepherd and lead us to paths of life-giving love.**

**We shall follow.**

**We pray in your name. Amen.**

**CENTERING**

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

**Supporting a Rights-Based Approach to Growing Food**

ADES works closely with the community to grow food in a rural region of El Salvador.

The Association of Economic and Social Development Santa Marta (ADES), a Mission and Service partner, is located in an area of Central America that is very vulnerable to climate change. This hot, dry region regularly experiences drought. Mining projects have also negatively affected the environment and the people in the region. ADES and other community organizations decided to act to protect the community’s right to a healthy environment.

An example of how ADES has responded is a three-year agroecology project co-funded by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation and The United Church of Canada Foundation, along with Mission and Service. Agroecology benefits the land and water because it recycles nutrients back into the soil. It also reduces production costs, lessening the financial burden on rural farmers.

In this project, ADES works closely with the community to grow food in a rural region of El Salvador, promoting sustainable agriculture that protects biodiversity, maintains the integrity of the land, and upholds rural culture.

At the centre of the project is the Dora Alicia Sorto School Farm, where rural families, mainly led by women, learn about agroecology. The school provides training, technical expertise, and seeds indigenous to the region. It focuses on preserving the surrounding environment and on upholding gender and human rights as part of its approach to food security.

Your gifts to Mission and Service help support ADES’ agroecology project. Thank you for your generosity!

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Worship and Celebration #71 Behold, What Manner of Love *(2 or 3 times)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0KGAWKgAbE>

**Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us**

**Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us**

**That we should be called the children of God**

**That we should be called the children of God**

The First Reading – **1 John 3:1-8**

The Gospel -**John 20:24-28** and **Luke 24:36-49**

Response: **May God bless to our learning and understanding these words from the scriptures.**

**REFLECTING**

**HYMN --** VU#595 We Are Pilgrims

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbnFjAdF1i8>

We are pilgrims on a journey,

fellow travellers on the road;

we are here to help each other

walk the mile and bear the load.

Sister, let me be your servant,

let me be as Christ to you;

pray that I may have the grace to

let you be my servant too.

I will hold the Christ-light for you

in the night-time of your fear;

I will hold my hand out to you,

speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,

when you laugh I’ll laugh with you;

I will share your joy and sorrow,

till we’ve seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,

we shall find such harmony,

born or all we’ve known together

of Christ’s love and agony.

Brother, let me be your servant,

let me be as Christ to you;

pray that I may have the grace to

let you be my servant too.

**OFFERING**

**DOXOLOGY –** VU #538 For the Gift of Creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIdQaBbIfEE>

For the gift of creation, the gift of your love,

and the gift of the Spirit by which we live,

we thank you and give you the fruit of our hands.

May your grace be proclaimed by the gifts that we give.

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION –**

In words of compassion, in words of reconciliation, **Christ is alive!**

In acts of peacemaking, in acts of peace bringing, **Christ is alive!**

In support for those living in fear and with a sense of helplessness, **Christ is alive!**

In gifts for the local church, in gifts for a needy world**, Christ is alive!**

Christ is alive, **Gracious God, may we be the evidence of Christ’s vitality. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**HYMN –**VU# 574 Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hyicnAV1Ow>

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,

tender and true, tender and true,

out of the heart of the Father above,

streaming to me and to you:

wonderful love, wonderful love

dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell

joyfully came, joyfully came,

came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,

sharing their sorrow and shame,

seeking the lost, seeking the lost,

saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;

why do they roam? why do they roam?

Love only waits to forgive and forget;

home, weary wanderers, home!

Wonderful love, wonderful love,

dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!

Come and abide, come and abide,

lifting my life till is rises above

envy and falsehood and pride:

seeking to be, seeking to be

lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

**COMMISSIONING & BLESSING**

**SENDING SONG** – Let us sing a blessing to one another –

(no video is available)

MV # 218 – May the Love of the Lord

May the love of the Lord rest upon your soul.

May God’s love dwell in you, throughout every day.

May God’s countenance shine upon you

and be gracious to you.

May God’s Spirit be upon you as you leave this place.

**EXTINGUISH THE CHRIST CANDLE**

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