**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 2025**

**PALM SUNDAY**



*(Ring the chime once)*

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN – VU # 198 Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4sS3PU3Als>

Come, O Spirit, dwell among us,

come with pentecostal power;

give the church a stronger vision,

help us face each crucial hour.

Built upon a firm foundation,

Jesus Christ, the cornerstone,

still the church is called to mission

that God’s love shall be made known.

We would raise our hallelujahs

for the grace of yesteryears;

for tomorrow’s unknown pathway,

hear, O God, our humble prayers.

In the church’s pilgrim journey

you have led us all the way,

still in presence move before us

fire by night and cloud by day.

Come, O Spirit, dwell among us,

give us words of fire and flame.

Help our feeble lips to praise you,

glorify your holy name.

God, all holy, Son and Spirit,

three in one: what mystery!

We would sing our loud hosannas

now and through eternity.

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

You are welcome here at Covenant United Church, where the ordinary is sanctified, where humanity is celebrated in all of its diversity, and compassion is expected. In this place together, we make it a holy place where love can dwell.

 A special **THANK YOU** to our coffee hour volunteers each month. This morning’s coffee with hot-cross buns is hosted by Heather Laverdiere & Veronica Renken. May 11th will be hosted by Rob & Joy Galloway & it is our annual Sundae Sunday! If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Heather.

 The office will be closed on April 16th. Cathie will be back to regular hours on April 23rd.

  Upcoming Easter Services…mark your calendar.

Maundy Thursday – April 17th at 5 pm with a pot luck supper and communion, in the auditorium.

Good Friday – April 18th at 10:30 am.

 Who doesn’t love a Potluck? Join us at 5:00 pm on Thursday, April 17th for our Maundy Thursday service, communion & potluck supper!

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

The light of Christ is a beacon of promise and hope.

**The light of Christ points us toward peace and justice.**

*(the candles are lit)*

*(Ring the chime)*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

All the people cried, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.”

**Still, Jesus was not recognized for who he was,**

**Or for the transformation he was to bring.**

*(The first Lenten candle is extinguished.)*

When we forget to love,

**we are slowly plunged into deep shadows of despair.**

*(The second Lenten candle is extinguished.)*

When we dismiss our commitment to relationship,

**we abandon who we are created to be.**

*(The third Lenten candle is extinguished.)*

When we fall prey to greed and conflict,

**we become those who would snuff out the Light of the World.**

*(The fourth Lenten candle is extinguished.)*

When we lack the courage of our faith,

**we allow more of the hatred and injustice in the world to dominate.**

*(The fifth Lenten candle is extinguished.)*

When we lose hope in God’s promises,

**we become those who would shut out the light.**

*(The last Lenten candle is extinguished.)*

**PRAYERS OF APROACH --** *Bill Steadman, Goulais River U.C., Goulais River, Ont.*

Today is a day of triumphal entry,

**as we join in welcoming Jesus.**

We are enthusiastic to be part of this world, O God,

**when there is joy and celebration all around us.**

Today is a day of sombre preparation.

**We seek your presence, O God, when the way is challenging.**

Today is a day of commitment as disciples of Jesus.

Motivate us to be a people of faith,

**willing to share in the journey Jesus embraced.**

Instill in us hope and confidence for the future, despite present realities.

**HYMN – VU # 123 Hosanna, Loud Hosanna** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8VgZTC0FSo>

Hosanna, loud hosanna the happy children sang;

through pillared court and temple the joyful anthem rang;

to Jesus, who had blessed them closed folded to his breast,

the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed ‘mid an exultant crowd,

the victory palm branch waving, and singing clear and loud;

the Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,

content that little children should on his bidding wait.

“Hosanna in the highest!” That ancient song we sing,

for Christ is our Redeemer; earth, let your anthems ring.

O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,

and in his humble presence eternally rejoice!

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

Supporting a rights-based approach to growing food.

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Community members show their pride in a successful bean harvest at the Dora Alicia Sorto School Farm, a project led by the Association of Economic and Social Development Santa Marta (ADES).

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!

**CENTERING**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Psalm 118** Voices United p.837, Parts 1 and 3

**Luke 19:28-40** – NRSV(UE)

**RESPONSE TO THE SCRIPTURES – MV #18 Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary** <https://www.google.com/search?q=mv+18+lord+prepare+me+to+be+a+sanctuary&rlz=1C5CHFA_enCA944CA945&oq=mv+18+Lord%2C+prepare+me&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgBECEYoAEyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigATIHCAMQIRigATIHCAQQIRiPAjIHCAUQIRiPAtIBCjExODg3ajFqMTWoAgiwAgE&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:590ae969,vid:48WpmdUUZxY,st:0>

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,

pure and holy tried and true;

with thanksgiving, I’ll be a living

sanctuary for you.

**REFLECTION**

**HYMN – VU # 124 He Came Riding on a Donkey**

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

He came riding on a donkey,

he came riding into town;

slow and easy kind of lowly

he came riding with the dawn.

His disciples walked beside him,

staying close, a little shy;

not too sure where he would guide them,

on to live or on to die.

But all the morning sang his praises;

waking birds and dancing wind;

here he is, the Son of David;

riding on to take his throne.

Then the children gathered, singing

shouts of laughter, bursting cheer;

in the streets their song was ringing,

“Hosannas” filled the morning air.

Timid adults strained to see him,

caught the Spirit, joined the song;

spread their cloaks along before him,

branches flashing in the sun.

So all the city sang his praises;

waking streets and dancing crowd;

here he is, the Son of David;

our Messiah, Son of God.

In our fasting, and our feasting,

called to follow in his way;

called to walk his road to Easter,

called to live his cross today.

Hosanna to the Son of David,

hosanna in the heavens above;

blessed is he who comes to save us,

blessed is he who brings his love.

Let us join to sing his praises;

open hearts and souls to God;

he is with us, Son of David;

God’s Messiah, Christ the Lord.

**OFFERING INVITATION**

**LENTEN DOXOLOGY** <https://www.google.com/search?q=doxology+piano+music&sca_esv=0d7d1c00198975e0&rlz=1C5CHFA_enCA944CA945&sxsrf=AHTn8zpLD9svIaD30mreCHhVv2ZkMYZhkA%3A1741142532148&ei=BLrHZ67aCMeo5NoP4OLioQE&ved=0ahUKEwiu7Iax9fGLAxVHFFkFHWCxOBQQ4dUDCBA&uact=5&oq=doxology+piano+music&gs_lp=Egxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAiFGRveG9sb2d5IHBpYW5vIG11c2ljMgUQABiABDIGEAAYFhgeMgYQABgWGB4yBhAAGBYYHjIGEAAYFhgeMgYQABgWGB4yBhAAGBYYHjILEAAYgAQYhgMYigUyCxAAGIAEGIYDGIoFMgsQABiABBiGAxiKBUi4UFAAWOhLcAB4AJABAJgBpgGgAYMSqgEENS4xNbgBA8gBAPgBAZgCFKAC_RLCAgoQIxiABBgnGIoFwgILEC4YgAQYkQIYigXCAgsQABiABBiRAhiKBcICChAAGIAEGEMYigXCAg4QABiABBixAxiDARiKBcICBBAjGCfCAg4QABiABBiRAhixAxiKBcICDRAAGIAEGLEDGEMYigXCAggQABiABBixA8ICBRAuGIAEmAMAkgcEMi4xOKAHrX4&sclient=gws-wiz-serp#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:bb80d6e9,vid:mUco1i7fEns,st:0>

Praise God throughout these forty days

Praise Christ our Lord whom God did raise

And praise the Spirit who imparts

God’s love in Christ into our hearts.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**We offer ourselves, O God, just as Jesus offered himself. We offer these gifts that you might bless them for your purposes in this world.**

**May they, and we be transformed for justice, for kindness, and for humble love, fostering relationships that make a difference in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**COMMUNION LITURGY**

God is with us

**We are not alone.**

Christ is present here.

**The Spirit is among us.**

Let us give thanks and praise,

**in memory and in hope.**

Blessed are you, gracious God,

Creator of light, Giver of all life, Source of love.

**From the dust of the earth you created us in your image.**

From the bondage of slavery, you delivered us.

Through all our wilderness wanderings, you guide us.

**You call us to renewal and repentance,**

**to justice and compassion,**

**to healing and wholeness.**

We thank you for sending us Jesus,

your Chosen One, Bread for our journey.

He lived, and loved this human life,

taking upon himself our suffering and sorrow,

being tested as we are tested,

and reaching out to broken victims

Of the world’s brokenness.

In him we come to know your truth,

to feel the life that is Christ within us.

**So it is that throughout these Lenten days and nights**

**we worship you and bless your name.**

**HYMN -- VU #108 Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights** (verses 1, 6) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xh4IoSRcyLM>

Throughout these Lenten days and nights

we turn to walk the inward way,

where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,

we live in hope till Easter day.

Rejoice, O sons and daughters, sing

and shout Hosannas! Raise the strain!

For Christ, whose death Good Friday brings

on Easter Day will rise again**.**

Mighty and tender God, in Jesus of Nazareth

we recognize the fullness of your grace:

Light, life, and love revealed

in words that confront and comfort us,

in teachings that challenge and change us,

in compassion that heals and frees us.

And now we gather at this table to remember

and to be filled with such longing for your realm,

That we may rise together

to turn our worship into witness

and to follow in your way.

We remember when Jesus ate with his friends,

he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it,

he broke it, and gave it to them saying:

“Take, eat. This is my body given for you.

Each time you do this, remember me.”

Then, he took a cup, and after giving thanks,

passed it to his friends saying:

“Drink. This cup that is poured out for you

is the promise of God, made in my blood.

Whenever you drink it, remember me.”

At this time, we also remember

all with whom you would have us share your feast.

We pray for all who are in sorrow, or in pain…

all who are ill, or alone…

* For 11 year old Sebastien Proulx as he goes through more surgery, to hopefully save his hearing. We give thanks that his cancer appears to be gone at this time.
* For Kori McMeekin
* For ourselves, our loved ones, our neighbours, friends, enemies, and strangers…
* For all who are traveling
* For all who live in fear, oppression, and hunger…
* For all whom the world counts as last and least…
* we pray for the church and its varied ministries
* For nations as they strive for peace and justice…

Loving God we rejoice in the gift of your grace,

remembering Christ’s life and death,

proclaiming his resurrection,

waiting in hope for his coming again.

May our lives proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Send, O God, your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts,

that all who share in this loaf and cup

may be the body of Christ:

Light, life and love in the world.

**In this hope, and as your people, we praise you.**

And as we feel the nearness of our God – as close to us as our breath, let us pray together, in the familiar words of Jesus:

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**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, for ever and ever. Amen**

**SHARING THE ELEMENTS**

The bread that we break

**Is our sharing in the life of Christ.**

The cup for which we give thanks,

**Is our sharing in the life of Christ.**

The gifts of God for the people of God!

*(the elements are opened and shared)*

**HYMN -- MV #194 Bread of Life, Feed My Soul**

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

Bread of life, feed my soul,

as the presence of the Spirit makes me whole.

Bread of life, fill my heart

with the grace and mercy you impart.

I have heard your voice calling,

“Come, my friend, and share

in the feast that is laid out for you

to show how much I care.”

Bread of life, help me live

a life as pure and true as Jesus did.

Bread of life, help me see

the boundless love of Christ for you and me.

I have heard your voice calling,

“Come, my friend, and share

in the feast that is laid out for you

to show how much I care.”

Repeat verse 1

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Life-giving God,**

**may we who share Christ’s body, live his risen life;**

**we, who drink his cup, bring new life to others;**

**we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world.**

**Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us;**

**So that we and all your children shall be free**

**and all creation will live to praise your name.**

**Amen.**

**COMMISSIONING PRAYER FOR PALM SUNDAY**

Today, Jesus entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph and was proclaimed Messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way.

Let these branches be signs of his victory, and grant that we who carry them may follow him in the way of the cross, that, dying and rising with him, we may enter into your kingdom, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns in us, with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

**EXTINGUISH THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**SENDING SONG –** **VU # 424 May the God of Hope Go with Us** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tL2rpQtbo1I>

May the God of hope go with us every day,

filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.

May the God of justice speed us on our way,

bringing light and hope to every land and race.

**Praying, let us work for peace,**

**singing, share our joy with all,**

**working for a world that’s new,**

**faithful when we hear Christ’s call.**

May the God of healing free the earth from fear,

freeing us for peace, both treasured and pursued.

May the God of love keep our commitment clear

to a world restored, to human life renewed. **(R)**

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