**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2025**

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**



*(Ring the chime once)*

**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. April’s coffee with hot-cross buns is hosted by Heather Laverdiere & Veronica Renken on Palm Sunday. If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Heather.

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

  Upcoming Easter Services…mark your calendar.

Palm Sunday Service – April 13th, with communion at 10:30 am. 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)*

**GATHERING HYMN – VU # 108 Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights** [(verses 1, 3 & 5) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xh4IoSRcyLM](%28verses%201%2C%203%20%26%205%29%20https%3A//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.

We bear the silence, cross and pain

of human burdens, human strife,

while sisters, brothers help sustain

our courage till the Feast of Life.

So let us choose the path of One

who wore, for us, the crown of thorn,

and slept in death that we might wake

to life on Resurrection Morn!

**CALL TO WORSHIP --** *based on Isaiah 43:16-21*

Long ago, the Lord made a road through the sea,

 a path through the swirling waters.

**He led a mighty army to destruction,**

 **an army of chariots and horses.**

Down they fell, never to rise,

 **snuffed out like the flame of a lamp!**

But the Lord says,

“Do not cling to events of the past

  **or dwell on what happened long ago.**

Watch for the new thing I am going to do.

 It is happening already—you can see it now!

**I will make a road through the wilderness**

 **and give you streams of water there.**

**PRAYERS OF APROACH AND CONFESSION** – *from Liturgies from Below*

God of Love, we need you now.

**Teach us to love those we have learned to hate.**

Teach us to pray for our enemies,

**to love you even in those we despise.**

God of Peace, we need you now.

**Teach us how to reconcile.**

Teach us to speak when we are silenced.

**Teach us to give up power when our power**

**renders others powerless or mute.**

God of Joy, we need you now!

**Receive our burdens, they are many.**

**Lift our spirits, they are weighed down.**

God of Life, we need you now.

**Grant us grace where shame restricts us.**

Grant us life where pain takes hold.

**Grant us wisdom when we would settle for easy answers.**

Grant us love, rooted in the eternal, the living, in you!

God bless us as we gather,

**In the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1QpLoOUJrg>

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 it rises above

envy and falsehood and pride:

seeking to be, seeking to be

lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

Talented and diverse youth are committed to developing leadership among their peers.

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“100 years from now, I definitely see the church being a diverse and open space for all because of the program boards that are being put in place.”

These are thoughts from Mariana Muhumuza, one of The United Church of Canada’s Youth Forum Leadership Animators, on her vision for the next 100 years of the United Church of Canada. More of Mariana's thoughts on the United Church’s Centennial can be found on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RupgsIszECU).

In July 2024, Mariana was among eight passionate youth from across Canada who gathered in Calgary. Together, they worked to lay the foundation for 100 young people under the age of 30 to attend The United Church of Canada's General Council 45 in 2025, coinciding with the church's Centennial commemorations.

This group of talented and diverse youth is committed to developing leadership among their peers. After their time in Calgary, they returned to their local communities and regions to work on learning goals and projects for four weeks, and to remain engaged throughout the year.

The group focused on building leadership and guiding their peers as they explore their roles in the church. Their placements in local and regional communities are designed to help them grow and prepare for the future.

Your gifts to Mission and Service support youth as they inspire communities and engage in leadership. Thank you.

**CENTERING --** Voices United #129 Said Judas to Mary

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Philippians 3:4b-14** NRSV(UE)

**John 12:1-8** – 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 #703 In the Bulb There Is Flower**

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

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;

in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!

In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,

unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;

there’s a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.

From the past will come the future; what is holds, a mystery,

unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;

in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.

In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,

unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

**OFFERING INVITATION**

It is our sincere hope that the gifts we bring of time, talent, and treasure will spread widely, like the smell of Mary’s fragrant oil, blessings and anointing where they are needed. Amen.

**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.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**RESPONSE**: **MV #85 Take, O Take Me as I Am**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gsMaxbJwr8>

Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;

set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

Oh! Prends-moi tel que je suis; Fais-moi vivre que pour toi.

Viens, mets ton sceau sur mon cœur; viens vivre en moi.

In this season of Lent when the world feels like it’s in upheaval, let us remember the goodness that still abounds around us, and let us take heart as the winter turns to spring in the Northern Hemisphere, and as we feel the nearness of our God – as close to us as our breath. Amen.

**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**

**HYMN – MV # 79 Spirit, Open My Heart** <https://www.google.com/search?q=More+Voices+%2379+Spirit%2C+Open+My+Heart&rlz=1C5CHFA_enCA944CA945&oq=More+Voices+%2379+Spirit%2C+Open+My+Heart&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQIRifBTIHCAIQIRifBTIHCAMQIRiPAjIHCAQQIRiPAtIBCTU1NjVqMGoxNagCCLACAQ&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:c8e6ad4e,vid:TUy4kas8WR8,st:0>

**Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.**

**As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,**

**Spirit, open my heart.**

God, replace my stony heart with a heart that’s kind and tender.

All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender. **(R)**

Write your love upon my heart as my law, my goal, my story.

In each thought, word, and deed, may my living bring you glory. **(R)**

May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of sister, brother.

In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another. **(R)**

**COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING --** *by Walter Murray, adapted for this use*

The heart of Christ will show the way.

The love of God will bless each day.

The Spirit’s call will open lives.

Our hope and joy will begin to rise.

Remember the words of the prophet Isaiah:

God said, “I am about to do a new thing;

now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Let us go forth as new creations in Christ!

**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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