**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**APRIL 17, 2025**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**



*(ring the chime once)*

**WORDS OF WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LAND AND PEOPLE**

Today, we acknowledge that we are located on the traditional Lands of Mattagami First Nation, Flying Post First Nation, and Matachewan First Nation, home to many Ojibway, Cree, Oji-Cree, Algonquin and Métis people. We acknowledge that we are situated in Treaty 9 territory (also known as the James Bay Treaty), which is steeped in the rich history of many First Nations, Metis and Inuit People.

**We make this acknowledgement as a step in recognizing First Peoples’ long history and living culture, made with respect to Elders, both past and present.**

*(ring the chime)*

**CALL TO WORSHIP –** *(Bill Steadman and Catherine Somervile)*

This evening brings with it joy and celebration,

Uncertainty and anticipation.

**This evening brings us to a new place of**

**Discernment and preparation.**

This evening leads us into the realities of Holy Week and the truth of living the promise of faith and hope.

**This evening leads us beyond the past and into a future that is not yet revealed.**

This evening, gathered in caring community, let us worship and remember.

**WASHING OF HANDS**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**GATHERING HYMN –** VU#132 Bitter Was the Night (verses 1,2,4,6) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mc6EhXP9T10>

Bitter was the night,

thought the cock would crow for ever.

Bitter was night before the break of day.

Saw you passing by,

told them all I didn’t know you.

Bitter was the night before the break of day.

What did Judas do?

Sold him for a bag of silver

Bitter was the night before the break of day.

Bitter was the night,

thought there’d never be a morning.

Bitter was the night before the break of day.

**OPENING WORDS**

We begin with the celebration of the people of Israel.

**Now, in the presence of loved ones and friends,**

**And with the symbols of festive rejoicing before us,**

**We gather for this sacred celebration.**

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES**

This is a time of happiness and rejoicing, of celebration and of cheer. …

“Holy Mystery, that is wholly Love” *(from A Song of Faith)*

**In praising God we say that life is sacred.**

**In kindling festive lights, we preserve life’s sanctity.**

**With every holy light we kindle,**

**The world is brightened to a higher harmony.**

**HYMN** –MV #18 Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48WpmdUUZxY>

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,

pure and holy tried and true;

with thanksgiving, I’ll be a living sanctuary for you.

**SHARING A STORY OF OUR ANCESTORS IN FAITH**

Let us give thanks to God for the deliverance of our Hebrew ancestors from the oppression of Egypt.

**Praised are you, O God, Creator of the Universe.**

**You create the fruit of the vine.**

And for God’s care and protection of those who are merciful and just throughout all ages.

**Praised are you, O God, who gives this joyful heritage**

**And who teaches us to know right from wrong.**

We are thankful for the fruits of the earth,

which you continually create.

Among people everywhere, sharing bread forms a bond of fellowship.

Let all who are hungry come and eat!

**Let all who are in want**

**Share in the hope of this celebration.**

**SEDER PSALM** – Psalm 113

Hallelujah! **Hallelujah!**

You who serve God, praise God!

**Just to speak his name is praise!**

Just to remember God is a blessing—

**now and tomorrow and always.**

From east to west, from dawn to dusk,

keep lifting all your praises to God!

God is higher than anything and anyone,

outshining everything you can see in the skies.

**Who can compare with God, our God,**

**so majestically enthroned,**

**Surveying his magnificent**

**heavens and earth?**

God picks up the poor from out of the dirt,

**rescues the forgotten who’ve been thrown out with the trash,**

Seats them among the honoured guests,

**a place of honour among the brightest and best.** **Hallelujah!**

**PRAYER OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION**

Lord Jesus, …

We praise you Gracious One,

**For all you were prepared to endure to reconcile us with God.**

We praise you Holy One,

**For your words of forgiveness and your invitation to your kin-dom.**

Forgive us when we allow ourselves to become too familiar with this story.

Forgive us when we take your suffering too lightly, and receive your grace too cheaply.

**As we watch with you, let us remember what this journey to the cross means, and count again the cost of love. 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 that 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 #199 When at This Table <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8lszLOYkWk>

When at this table I receive a blessing,

the broken bread, the wind of life for me,

then let me share the peace with you, my neighbour,

and let the Spirit set our spirits free.

If at this table I have need of healing,

unbidden grief, relationship gone wrong,

the let me know the hands of God enfolding,

and let lament become believing song.

If at this table I forget the hungry,

the dispossessed and warfare’s spreading stain,

then let this bread become the bread of judgement,

this wine the sharp awareness of that pain.

If at this table I make dedication

to give my life in serving what is good,

then let me centre be where God invites me,

and show the words of Jesus understood.

What faith I have, I bring to join this table,

what hope I hold, in Christ is taught and true;

with brothers, sisters, I will share the blessing,

the feast where God is making all things new.

**THE COMMUNION**

When the time arrived for…

Today, our bread is chocolate, and our juice… strawberries.

**When we eat the bread, we remember**

**The body of Christ Jesus,**

**broken for us.**

When the meal was finished,

Jesus took the cup and blessed it,

And gave it to the disciples.

**When we receive the juice,**

**we remember the blood of Christ Jesus,**

**willingly shed for us all.**

Now, gathered today, in this place,

As we share in these elements

we remember the One who died to bring us life.

**We will continue sharing this meal, until his return. Amen.**

*Communion is shared.*

This chocolate that we eat

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

The strawberries for which we give thanks,

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

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**We thank you, Lord, for this sacred meal,**

**For giving us your presence and your life,**

**And for reminding us your grace endures forever.**

**We will celebrate these and all your blessings,**

**For all eternity.**

**Amen.**

**BENEDICTION** – *by Rev. Gordon Nodwell*

Voices United #429 May the Blessing of God be Upon You

*(no video is available)*

**May the blessing of God be upon you.**

**May God’s love light all your way.**

**May the grace of Christ enfold you**

**and peace around you stay.**

**May the Spirit of God dwell within you.**

**May you live in joy each day.**

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