**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2025**

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN THE SEASON OF EASTER**

**WITH THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION**



*(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.

 Today’s coffee is hosted by Rob & Joy Galloway & it is our annual Sundae Sunday! June is our wrap up Sunday hosted by Heather Laverdiere & Veronica Renken (with a little help from our friends). Summer months will be ‘whatever will be’. September – our ‘welcome back’ will be hosted by Veronica Renken & Heather Laverdiere (with a little help from our friends). **THANK YOU** to all that help make this happen!!!!!!

 WOW – Women on Wednesday will be held on May 14th from 11:30 – 1:00 pm here at the church – with a guest speaker. Please contact Heather, Veronica or the church office if you are planning to attend, as we need to know for the lunch.

 **Finances – Heather Laverdiere & Susan Boisvert**

January 1, 2025 to April 30, 2025

* General Fund: Revenue $ 46693

         Expenses $ 36720

 From Investment $ 0

* Building Funds: Revenue $ 742

 Expenses $0

* M&S: Revenue $ 2250

Account balances are now: General Fund: $ 14614

Building Fund $ 15126   Outreach $ 884

Investments $129875.94 (as of December 31, 2024)

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

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TERRITORY**

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.**

**INTROIT – VU #958 Halle, Halle, Halle**

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! (repeat)

*(ring the chime)*

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

On this fourth Sunday of the Easter season,

we shout and sing the glad news:

**Jesus Christ is risen indeed!**

We light the Christ candle

**because he is here among us.**

Hallelujah!

**Hallelujah! Amen!**

**CALL TO WORSHIP –** *(Heather Ferrier, Trinity U.C., Mahone Bay, N.S.)*

With grumbles, yawns, and sleepy heads,

**our Shepherd calls us from our beds.**

In ones and twos, in threes and fours,

**our Shepherd calls us through the door.**

Friends and family, old and new,

**our Shepherd calls us to our pew.**

In summer, autumn, winter, spring,

**our Shepherd calls us here to sing!**

**PRAYER OF APPROACH** – *(written by Wanda Winfield)*

God is my shepherd,

**who is in heaven.**

There is nothing I shall lack,

**as you give us today our daily bread.**

You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,

you lead me beside peaceful waters,

**as your will is done on earth.**

And you revive my spirit,

**as your will is also done in heaven.**

You guide me in right pathways

for your name’s sake,

**because your name is holy.**

Though I walk through the valley

of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,

**for it is you who delivers me from evil.**

You are with me, your rod

and your staff are my comfort,

**for it is you who forgives me.**

You spread a table for me

in the sight of my enemies,

**as I have forgiven them.**

You anoint my head with oil,

**my cup is overflowing.**

Save me from the temptation of boasting,

as it is surely your goodness and mercy

that shall follow me all the days of my life,

**for the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours,**

and I will dwell in God’s house my whole life long,

**now and forever. Amen.**

**ACT OF PRAISE – VU #747 Psalm 23 The Lord’s My Shepherd**

The Lord’s my Shepherd, I’ll not want;

he makes me down to lie

in pastures green; he leadeth me,

the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again;

and me to walk doth make

within the paths of righteousness,

even for his own name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk in death’s dark vale,

yet will I fear no ill;

for thou art with me, and thy rod

and staff me comfort still.

My table thou has furnishèd

in presence of my foes;

my head thou dost with oil anoint,

and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life

shall surely follow me,

and in God’s house for evermore

my dwelling-place shall be.

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

Learning about God’s love:

Young 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals explore and reconcile their faith with their identity.



Queer Kid Bible Camp is a unique and affirming space that has emerged to provide a supportive environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth within the framework of spirituality. Started by Mission and Service partner Silver Spire United Church in St. Catharines, Ontario, Queer Kid Bible Camp blends teachings of God’s love with messages of inclusivity.

Queer individuals have often been marginalized or excluded in spiritual experiences, which can make them feel isolated and alienated. Queer Kid Bible Camp aims to challenge these negative experiences by fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance in a spiritual context. The camp offers a place for young 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals to explore and reconcile their faith with their identity. Through theological and spiritual discussions, youth can openly ask questions without feeling uncertain about their safety.

The benefits of Queer Kid Bible Camp extend beyond its immediate impact on individual campers. The camp experience sparks conversation with parents and guardians who want to connect and understand their children better. As young participants gain confidence and self-acceptance, they become advocates for change within their own communities. The Rev. Karen Orlandi of Silver Spire United Church has seen a wonderful ripple effect, noting that she’s seen “healing for queer adults as they see queer kids openly embracing their identity.”

Your support through [Mission and Service](https://united-church.ca/mission-and-service-old) provides the queer community with opportunities to thrive in safe environments as they learn about God’s love. Thank you.

**CENTERING**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Acts 9:36-43** – Good News Translation

**Psalm 23** Voices United p. 749

Refrain #2**:** **The God of love my shepherd is;**

**What can I want or need?**

God is my shepherd

**There is nothing I shall lack.**

You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,

**You lead me beside peaceful waters.**

You revive my spirit,

**You guide me in the right pathways for your name’s sake. Refrain**

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you are with me,

**Your rod and your staff are my comfort.**

You spread a table for me in the sight of my enemies

**You anoint my head with oil, my cup is overflowing.**

Surely your goodness shall follow me all the days of my life,

**And I will dwell in God’s house my whole life long. Refrain**

**John 10:22-30** – Good News Translation

**RESPONSE:** **May God bless to our learning and understanding**

**These words from the scriptures.**

**REFLECTING ON THE SCRIPTURES**

**HYMN – VU # 232 Joyful, Joyful We Adore You**

Joyful, joyful we adore you,

God of glory, life and love;

hearts unfold like flowers before you,

opening to the sun above.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,

drive the gloom of doubt away;

giver of immortal gladness,

fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,

earth and heaven reflect your rays,

starts and angels sing around you,

centre of unbroken praise.

Field and forest, vale and mountain,

flowery meadow, flashing sea,

chanting bird and flowing mountain,

sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving,

ever blessing, ever blest,

wellspring of the joy of living,

ocean depth of happy rest!

Source of grace and fount of blessing,

let you light upon us shine;

teach us how to love each other,

lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals join the mighty chorus

which the morning stars began;

God’s own love is reigning o’er us,

joining people hand in hand.

Ever singing, march we onward,

victors in the midst of strife;

joyful music leads us sunward

in the triumph song of life.

 **OFFERING INVITATION**

**DOXOLOGY – MV # 188 I Thank You, Thank You, Jesus**

I thank you, thank you, Jesus,

I thank you, thank you, Jesus,

I thank you, thank you, Jesus, in my heart.

I thank you, thank you, Jesus,

I thank you, thank you, Jesus,

I thank you, thank you, Jesus, in my heart.

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION –**

**For the blessing of this and all our days, we thank you, Gracious God. Accept, we pray, not just this money but also our lives freely offered in gratitude for all you have done for us. Use all that we offer in this place of worship and wherever you might take us in service of your love. Amen.**

**COMMUNION HYMN – VU # 457 As We Gather at Your Table**

As we gather at your table,

as we listen to your word,

help us know, O God, your presence;

let our hearts and minds be stirred.

Nourish us with sacred story

til we claim it as our own;

teach us through this holy banquet

how to make Love’s victory known.

Turn our worship into witness

in the sacrament of life,

send if forth to love and serve you,

bringing peace where there is strife.

Give us, Christ, your great compassion

to forgive as you forgave;

may we still behold your image

in the world you died to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon

other guests to share that feast

where triumphant Love will welcome

those who had been last and least.

There no more will envy blind us

nor will pride our peace destroy,

as we join with saints and angels

to repeat the sounding joy.

**COMMUNION LITURGY** – *by Alydia Smith*

God is with us!

**We are not alone!**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love, you are beyond complete knowledge, above perfect description. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Source of Life, Living Word, and Bond of Love, you are creative and self-giving, generously moving. In all the near and distant corners of the universe nothing exists that does not find its source in you. *(based on* ***A Song of Faith****)*

Even when we turn away from you, you are with us;

Your presence never fails us, your gifts of hope and new life transform us.

We praise you for Jesus Christ, eternal as your love, our bond to one another. We rejoice with all your people of every time and place, and with angels and archangels, to proclaim the glory of your name:

*Sanctus and Benedictus* (*More Voices* 203)

**O holy, holy holy God, O God of time and space.**

**All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace.**

**Hosanna in the highest heav’n, creation sings your praise.**

**And blessed is the One who comes and bears your name always.**

It is Jesus, God incarnate, the Risen Christ, who joins us together as a community of broken but hopeful believers: loving what he loved, living what he taught, and striving to be his faithful servants in our time and place.

In this meal we remember Jesus, his promises, and the price he paid for who he was, what he said, and what he did.

On the night before Jesus died, he took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, “Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”

After supper, Jesus took the cup, and poured, saying, “This is the new covenant, remember me.”

**We do remember.**

We remember his life of love, his friendship, his teaching, his dying, and his rising to life again.

In sharing this meal, we live out the mystery of our faith:

*Memorial Acclamation*(*More Voices* 204)

**Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,**

**Christ will come again!**

**Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,**

**Christ will come again!**

Holy Mystery, God the Spirit, we call on you to transform these familiar things, as you continually transform the world around us.

Bless this bread and this cup,

 the grain and the grape,

 the farmer and the harvest,

 the seed and the sower.

So that in the sharing of these simple elements in community, we may taste and see your goodness, so that we might catch a glimpse of what it is to be in communion with you and with one another.

Through Christ, in Christ, and with Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, God most holy, now and forever.

*Great Amen*(*More Voices* 205)

**Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosannah, and amen!**

**Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosannah, and amen!**

Breaking the Bread, Pouring the Cup

The body of Christ,

**the bread of life.**

The lifeblood of Christ,

**the cup of blessing.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God!**

Choir: VU #466 Eat This Bread *(refrain)*

Sharing the Meal

May this bread nourish us in body, mind, and spirit, and this drink refresh us all.

**Response: Thanks be to God.** *(the elements are shared)*

Choir: VU #466 Eat This Bread *(refrain)*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life. We are fed by your love; we are strengthened by your life. We are sent forth into this world to live into the visions God has laid on our hearts. We are now commissioned to: feed as we have been fed,**

**forgive as we have been forgiven, love as we have been loved. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

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

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.

**COMMISSIONING and BLESSING**

**EXTINGUISH THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**SENDING SONG – Go Now in Peace**

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.

God will go with you each hour of every day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.

Know God will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.

Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there filling you with love.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

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