**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024**

**6th SUNDAY IN THE SEASON OF CREATION**

**AND THE CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING**



**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

You are welcome here at Covenant United Church, where the ordinary is sanctified, where humanity is celebrated, 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! We are looking for volunteers to host the coffee hour November 3rd and December 15th. If you are willing to help, please contact Heather.

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

 The next WOW will be meeting October 16th here at the church. Please call the office or let Heather or Veronica know if you plan on attending so we can plan accordingly.

If you know someone who needs comfort, please help yourself to a prayer shawl on the shawl ladder at the back of the sanctuary.

 Red Solo Cup Single serving Soup returns after Thanksgiving. If you have an extra cup or so to donate, please freeze and put in the Kitchen freezer. Red solo cups available for use. Poster on the foyer bulletin board or contact Joy for more information.

 January 1, 2024 to September 30, 2024

* General Fund: Revenue $63,344         Expenses $84,775

From Investment $10,000

* Building Funds: Revenue $1401        Expenses $0
* M&S: Revenue $4,570

Account balances are now: General Fund: $3,094  Building Fund $13,809   Outreach $217

Investments $141,421 (as of June 30, 2024)

 October is Socktober. Help support local Kinnettes in their sock collection. A box is available in the foyer for your donations.

*(ringing the chimes)*

**CENTERING**

**HYMN – MV # 30 It’s a Song of Praise to the Maker**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zykNO2NCvxI&list=PLJ5l-D6vQ_mm4u_ZkFJ1A8xcrqy9TLalH&index=86>

It’s a song of praise to the Maker,

the thrush sings high in the tree.

It’s a song of praise to the Maker,

the gray whale sings in the sea,

**And by the Spirit you and I**

**can join our voice to the holy cry**

**and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.**

It’s a call of life to the Giver

when waves and waterfalls roar.

It’s a call of life to the Giver

when high tides break on the shore, **(R)**

It’s a hymn of love to the Lover;

the bumblebees hum along.

It’s a hymn of love to the Lover;

the summer breeze joins the song, **(R)**

It’s the chorus of all creation;

it’s sung by all living things.

It’s the chorus of all creation;

a song the universe sings, **(R)**

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES --**

Living in the light of Christ,

And being the light of Christ

**Let this light remind us,**

**“We believe in God who has created and is creating,**

**Who has come in Jesus**

**The Word made flesh**

**Who works in us and others by the Spirit.”**

*light the Christ Candle*

Moving and having our being,

In the light of the Word of God

**Let these lights remind us,**

**“We are called to be the Church**

**To celebrate God’s presence,**

**to live with respect in Creation.”**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TERRITORY –**

Today, we acknowledge that we are living and working on territory that has been the traditional home of the Mattagami First Nation, and many Ojibwy, Cree, Oji-Cree, and Metis people; land that is governed under Treaty #9.

**Creator God, you have given wisdom to the First Nations how to live in harmony with nature. Give the rest of us the humility to learn from them and be co-guardians of this beautiful, resilient but fragile planet you have provided for us all. Amen.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP –** *Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont.*

Come into this space of contemplation, of prayer, and of gratitude.

**We come in from the cruel ironies and suffering of our world.**

Come into this gathering as those seeking wholeness and relationship.

**We come as those weary and uncertain from a puzzling world.**

Come and breathe in God in prayer:

**Our minds are full of worries, distractions, and needs.**

**Hold us, Loving God, we pray, as we breathe deeply of your healing power in reverent silence.**

*(take time for deep breaths)*

We continue our prayers in one voice, more deeply aware of your grace, O God:

**You assure us we are not alone, for we live in your good Creation. In Christ, through Christ, and by Christ, we become one in your love. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may you integrate us into wholeness, that we may carry others as we are also carried by you in this suffering world. We offer our gratitude this day for all that you mean to our lives. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF APPROACH –**  *David Sparks, Summerland, B.C.*

God, Our Creator, you have given us so much.

**Thanksgiving fills our hearts as we return to worship.**

God, Our Foundation, you have supported us so well.

**A sense of blessing is ours as we take our place in the faith community.**

God the Challenger, you are ahead of us as we consider the coming months.

**We will not shrink from the path of truth and justice.**

God the Eternal One, you know our joys, our fears, and our uncertainties.

**In the good days and the days of anxiety, we will trust you, our loving God. Amen.**

**HYMN – VU # 296 This Is God’s Wondrous World**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0PG6wt6fjI>

This is God’s wondrous world,

and to my listening ears

all nature sings, and round me rings

the music of the spheres.

This is God’s wondrous world;

I rest me in the thought

of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,

God’s hand the wonders wrought.

This is God’s wondrous world:

the birds their carols raise;

the morning light, the lily white,

declare their Maker’s praise.

This is God’s wondrous world:

God shines in all that’s fair;

in the rustling grass or mountain pass,

God’s voice speaks everywhere.

This is God’s wondrous world:

O let me ne’er forget

that though the wrong seems oft so strong,

God is the ruler yet.

This is God’s wondrous world:

why should my heart be sad?

Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:

God reigns, let earth be glad!

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION --** *Jani Francis, St. Andrew’s U.C., Indian Head, Sask.*

Loving God, help us to stop trying to force our will in your world. Help us to catch ourselves when we are unkind and judgmental, when we complain about everything out of habit, and when we take people and blessings for granted. Forgive us for being careless with the world’s abundance. We know better. Help us to do better. Give us strength to follow the Way of Jesus. Amen.

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE --**

**We belong to God. We are God’s creations, crafted with love and wonder. We are humans who are doing our best at any given time**.

The good news is this: we turn to God in our imperfection and pain, and we are restored through the Way of Jesus the Christ. God’s will is always healing. God’s will is always peace. God’s will is always love.

**Let us commit again to living God’s will. We can rest assured we are not alone, for God is with us always. AMEN.**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**HYMN – VU #290 (Taize) Nothing Can Trouble**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfT-_bypEic>

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.

Those who seek God shall never go wanting.

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.

Those who seek God shall never go wanting.

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.

God alone fills us.

**SCRIPTURES**

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING **Psalm 126** – The Message

It seemed like a dream, too good to be true,

when God returned Zion’s exiles.

We laughed, we sang,

we couldn’t believe our good fortune.

We were the talk of the nations—

“God was wonderful to them!”

God was wonderful to us;

we are one happy people.

And now, God, do it again—

bring rains to our drought-stricken lives

So those who planted their crops in despair

will shout “Yes!” at the harvest,

So those who went off with heavy hearts

will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.

**RESPONSE – VU #290 (Taize) Nothing Can Trouble**

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RESPONSIVE READING – ***based on Joel 2:21-24*** *(adapted LH)*

Fear not, people of Earth! Be glad and celebrate!

God has done great things.

Fear not, wild animals!

The fields and meadows are ready for harvest.

**The trees are bearing fruit again:**

**a bumper crop of fig trees and vines!**

Children of the kin-dom, celebrate!

Be glad in your God.

God is giving you a teacher

to train you how to live right—

**Teaching, like rain out of heaven, showers of words**

**to refresh and nourish our souls,**

**just as Jesus did.**

And plenty of food for our bodies—

Grain, fruits, and vegetables,

meat, and fresh water to drink.

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THIRD SCRIPTURE READING – **1 Timothy 2: 1-7** - The Message *(adapted for this use)*

Simple Faith and Plain Truth

The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation. This is the way our Savior God wants us to live.

*God* wants not only us but everyone saved, you know, everyone to get to know the truth we’ve learned: that there’s one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator *with us and within us*—Jesus, who offered himself in exchange for everyone held captive *by anything they may have said or done or neglected saying or doing*, to set them all free. Eventually the news is going to get out. This and this only has been my appointed work: getting this news to those who have never heard of God, and explaining how it works by simple faith and plain truth.

**RESPONSE – VU #290 (Taize) Nothing Can Trouble**

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GOSPEL READING – **Matthew 6: 25-33** – NRSV(UE)

Do Not Worry

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

**RESPONSE –**

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

**These words from the scriptures.**

**REFLECTING ON THE SCRIPTURES**

**HYMN – VU # 307 Touch the Earth Lightly**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLmJb4v2fq8&list=PLJ5l-D6vQ_mm4u_ZkFJ1A8xcrqy9TLalH&index=20>

Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,

nourish the life of the world in our care:

gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,

trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger, who create hunger,

agents of death for all creatures that live,

we who would foster clouds of disaster,

God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

Let there be greening, birth from the burning,

water that blesses and air that is sweet,

health in God’s garden, hope in God’s children,

regeneration that peace will complete.

God of all living, God of all loving,

God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,

teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,

using us gently and making us one.

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

**What’s for Thanksgiving Dinner?**

One of the programs your Mission and Service gifts support is Food for the North.

Thanksgiving is a time when many of us come together with loved ones, enjoying the abundance of food that graces our tables. It’s a time that reminds us of the blessings we have received. Yet, as we give thanks for our own blessings, it’s important to remember that many others, both here in Canada and around the world, are struggling with food insecurity. Your generous support through Mission and Service is making a difference by helping feed thousands of people in need.

One of the programs your Mission and Service gifts support is Food for the North, which serves Canada’s most remote northern communities. Food is not just scarce there but also incredibly costly. According to the federal government, back in 2019, the average Canadian family of four spent an average of $1,000/month on groceries. But in Nunavut, that same family would have to spend $1,600/month to get the same amount of food. And that was five years ago—imagine how much worse things are now! Your contributions ensure that these families have access to affordable and nutritious food, changing lives and offering hope in a time of growing need.

This Thanksgiving, as you gather with your family, please know how deeply grateful we are for your support. Your gifts through Mission and Service extend far beyond your own table, reaching into the homes of those who would otherwise go without. Together, we are not just providing meals—we are sharing the love and compassion of our faith with those who need it most. Thank you for making such a profound impact. Have a blessed Thanksgiving.

**OFFERING**– *Elaine Bidgood Sveet, First Lutheran, Rugby and Leeds, North Dakota*

Thank you, Gracious God. Gratitude is the foundation of our giving. And so we thank you for all you have entrusted to each of us individually. We thank you for this church you have entrusted to us together. Thank you for leading us to give ourselves away through the sharing of time, talents, and resources to your glory always. Amen.

Let us sing together:

**DOXOLOGY -- VU 227 For the Fruit of All Creation** *(verse 1)*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FDx-MwLdt0>

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.

For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.

For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,

silent growth while we are sleeping,

future needs in earth’s safekeeping, thanks be to God.

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION**

*Barbara Johns, Queenswood U.C., Orleans, Ont.*

**We bring the work of our hands.**

**We bring the work of our hearts.**

**These gifts are the love of our hearts.**

**Bless our offering and send your spirit upon it so that our gifts may join the gifts of all your church to help your kin-dom come. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**HYMN – MV # 41 O Beautiful Gaia**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96Lf6Xob900&list=PLJ5l-D6vQ_mm4u_ZkFJ1A8xcrqy9TLalH&index=25>

**O beautiful Gaia, O Gaia, calling us home.**

**O beautiful Gaia, calling us on.**

Soil yielding its harvest, O Gaia, calling us home.

Soil yielding its harvest, calling us on. **(R)**

Waves crashing on granite, O Gaia, calling us home.

Waves crashing on granite, calling us on. **(R)**

Pine bending in windstorm, O Gaia, calling us home.

Pine bending in windstorm, calling us on. **(R)**

Loon nesting in marshland, O Gaia, calling us home.

Loon nesting in marshland, calling us on. **(R)**

**COMMISSIONING & BLESSING** - *Mark Dutkoski, St. Andrew’s U.C., DeWinton, Alta.*

Recognizing that the Bible is as relevant today as when it was written, take the message from 1 Timothy about praying for everyone and apply it.

Pray for yourself, your family and friends, and people in the news who you feel would benefit from your prayerful support.

Go in peace and with the blessing of God.

**EXTINGUISH THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**SENDING SONG – Go Now in Peace**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YubJLU7N1Ug>

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, walking by your side.

*(or:* Watching from above)

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

Amen. Amen. Amen

**POSTLUDE**

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