**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2024**

**27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**AND REIGN OF CHRIST SUNDAY**



**CANDLE LIGHTING**

Jesus said (Matthew 18:20): “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” We light the Christ candle as a reminder that we are not alone. May its flame warm our hearts and inspire us to live the message of the gospel. *(light the Christ candle, and then the 3 pillars)*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LAND**

Syllables known as “vocables” – that do not have a specific meaning in any particular language are often used in Indigenous song. In our tradition, we also use non-specific words like “hallelujah” to express gratitude or praise. Let us acknowledge this land we share, singing:

**VU #958 Halle, Halle, Halle!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGEs9UGIi4w>

Halle, halle, halle–lujah!

Halle, halle, halle–lujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! ***(****repeat as many times as your musician chooses)*

**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! Volunteering on December 15th are Heather & Veronica and January 12th are Carol Third & Evelyn Glazier. We are looking for volunteers to host the next coffee hour in February. If you are willing to help, please contact Heather.

 Office hours next week are Friday, November 29th from 9:00 – 3:30.

 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.

 Covenant will host our annual Christmas Carol and Coffee drop in on December 10, 2024 1-3 pm. Ask your singing friends to join the Covenant choir and all who enjoy Christmas music. Volunteers for desserts appreciated. Further details to come.

 For the 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism a wide range of speakers will be presenting on Tuesdays (all at 7:00 pm Eastern Time), throughout October and November. These can be accessed at home through Churchx, and we will have sessions in person at Covenant United in the South Room each week.

Here is the list for the remaining weeks:

Tues. Nov. 26: What Will We Sing When We Need to Sing a New Song? with the Then Let Us Sing! Committee.

 DIY Community Health Timmins has collaborated with Northern College to organize a "pop-up" workshop next Wednesday November 27th.   The workshop is from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM at the Timmins Museum. Guest speakers include Dr. Scott Neufeld and local harm reductionist Michelle Couture; who will speak about harm reduction and strategies to counter misinformation and stigma surrounding these important evidence-based approaches. If you could please share with your networks and teams and encourage participation in this important community conversation. Registration is Free (suggested $10 donation to DIY Community Health Timmins) and available here: <https://bit.ly/3ZdGViQ>

 The Church Property Network will meet online on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7pm ET (in the South Room) to discuss the following topics:

December 12: Faithful Footprints and Energy Efficiency, with Stephen Collette and David Constable

January 15: Rental Strategies 101, with Katja Brittain and Daniel Reed

 Join us on December 1st at 5:30 pm for our Christmas Turkey Pot Luck Dinner. Supplied will be the turkey, dressing & gravy. There will be a sign-up sheet in the lobby for vegetable casseroles, potato casseroles & desserts. For more information, please contact Heather, Tim or Veronica.

 Our annual Christmas Pageant will be held on December 15th.

*(ringing the chimes)*

**ANTHEM**

**CALL TO WORSHIP --** *inspired by Revelation 1:4b–8*

*Doris Van Den Eeckhout, Richmond U.C., Aylmer, Ont.*

Grace and peace from God,

**who always was and still is to come,**

the Alpha and Omega,

**the beginning and the end.**

Today we name the reign of Christ,

**the reign that was with us before, is with us now, and is not yet here.**

Let us worship together,

**today and in the days ahead.**

**PRAYERS OF APPROACH** *– Elaine Bidgood Sveet, North Dakota*

We are here, Loving Lord.

**We have shown up for worship.**

But help us to do more than show up.

**We are alive with spirits strong for service and attitudes eager to be broadened.**

Let us do more than take up space.

**We are here, O God, each of us with the grace**

**and gifts you have instilled in us.**

Together, we welcome your Spirit and all you might draw out of us,

**for we are not just here, we are ready, O God. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF CONFESSION --** *Aaron Palmer, New Liskeard*

Dear God, we come before you on this Reign of Christ Sunday to celebrate the end of one liturgical year and the dawning of the next one.

We admit that we have disregarded “end times” that lie ahead in our own lives and in this world.

Despite their inevitability, we limit our focus to accumulating material things and count this as the measure of success.

**Alpha and Omega, we forget your mysterious and majestic nature.**

**You created the heavens and the earth and only you know when they began and when they will end.**

**Despite our fear of endings, you, O God, remain our refuge and strength.**

Let us remember that although mountains shake, waters roar and foam, and nations are in an uproar, you are there,

the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

Help us to shift our priorities and consider the end times in all their mystery and uncertainty.

**For, as people of God, we can rest assured that while heaven and earth will pass away, your presence will never pass away.**

**For this we give thanks as we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Despite our naivety, God’s presence with us is steadfast; despite our possessiveness, Jesus reminds us to focus on those around us; and despite our oblivious nature, the small still voice of God reminds us of what is truly important: caring for God’s children and for Creation.

**We are a forgiven and beloved people. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**GOD’S MISSION, OUR STORIES**

Every Gift with Vision provides support for a specific Mission and Service partner.

“I have everything I need.”

“I can’t think of anything I want.”

“No gifts for me this year.”

This is something many of us have heard, and maybe something we’ve found ourselves saying. And while it may be true, despite not wanting or needing anything, we know gifts are going to happen anyway. Instead of searching “gifts for someone who is hard to buy for,” why not give Gifts with Vision?

Gifts with Vision is a way to give gifts from the comfort of home, with no packaging or wrapping needed. Instead of gadgets and fleeting trends, Gifts with Vision is full of gifts that will help transform lives throughout Canada and around the world. When placing your order, you’ll be able to add an e-card, including a delivery date, for each gift.

Every Gift with Vision provides support for a specific Mission and Service partner offering a unique project. Without Mission and Service, Gifts with Vision projects would not be possible. Thank you for supporting both.

When Christmas rolls around, remember that a meaningful gift is a simple click away. If madly dashing around the mall on Christmas Eve has been your gift-buying style, kick back and relax. Gifts with Vision has you covered!

**HYMN – MV # 65 When We Are Tested (verse 1 & 4)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajZ1Eej6QOY>

When we are tested and wrestle alone,

famished for bread when the world offers stone,

nourish us, God, by your word and your way,

food that sustains us by night and by day.

When we have struggled and searched through the night,

sorting and sifting the wrong from the right,

Saviour, surround us with circles of care,

angels of healing, of hope, and of prayer.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Responsive – **Psalm 132** – The Voice

A song for those journeying to worship.

Eternal One, don’t let the suffering of our father David be forgotten— for his sake, remember!

**Remember the pledge he made, how he poured out his heart to the Eternal,**

 **the promise he made to the Mighty One of Jacob:**

He said, “I will not go inside my house or lie down in my bed;

I will not even rest my eyes— I will not take comfort in sleep—

**Until I find a dwelling place for You, the Eternal,**

 **a holy residence dedicated to the Mighty One of Jacob.”**

We heard rumors of the holy ark in Ephrathah,

*[the region where Bethlehem is]*

 and later we found it in the field of Jaar.

**Let us journey to His dwelling place;**

 **let us worship at His footstool.**

Eternal One, arise and go to Your new home—

  **You and the ark of Your strength.**

Let every priest join the march wearing righteousness,

**and let songs of joy erupt from the hearts and mouths of Your godly ones.**

For the well-being of Your anointed servant,

 do not turn Your back on David.

The Eternal made His own promise, sworn in truth to David,

 **an oath which He cannot, and will not break:**

“I will continue your dynasty, David;

 **one of your descendants will sit on your throne.**

If your children obey My covenant

 and follow the statutes which I shall teach them,

**And if they remain faithful, their children will also**

 **sit upon your throne—forever.”**

**Revelation 1: 4-8** NRSV(UE)

**John 18: 33-37** NRSV(UE)

Let us respond together, saying:

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

**These words from the scriptures.**

**REFLECTING**

**HYMN – MV # 106 I Am the Dream** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvhBm5Xqbqo>

I am the dream and you are the dreamer.

I am the song and you are the rhyme.

You are the tune sung in ev’ry silence.

You are the now in the endless stream of time.

I am the bell and you are the silence.

You are the yearning I cannot curtail.

I am the blest and you the blessing.

You are the wilds in which I lose my trail.

You are the word and I the echo.

You are the leader and I am the led.

You are the joy and I the laughter.

You are the Rock on which I lay my head.

**OFFERING INVITATION**

Each day of our lives we are presented with opportunities to respond to God’s love and give of ourselves in faithful service. There are many ways to give, each according to our own abilities, with all gifts working together for the sake of the mission and ministry entrusted to us by God.

**DOXOLOGY -- VU # 540 Grant Us, God, the Grace**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dM2dUqmLPek>

Grant us, God, the grace of giving,

with a spirit large and free,

that ourselves and all our living

we may offer faithfully.

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION** –

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

**Alpha and Omega, our beginning and our ending, bless us. Bless this church and its needed ministry. Bless these gifts entrusted to us as they support your church, which is granted to our care. Bless the work of the Mission and Service Fund and its promotion of justice, solidarity, advocacy, and human dignity. Alpha and Omega, receive these offerings with joy for the benefit of your world. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE --** *by Diane Trollope, St. Andrew’s UC, Sudbury*

In these times of challenge, when we look to the Divine for guidance in our hearts and minds, in our family and friends, for health and strength, for those who care for us and our loved ones when we need help, medical or otherwise. For the food and shelter that is needed in these winter months… we seek the peace that passes all understanding. Let us pray:

Creator God, who loves beyond our wisdom and knowing,

Settle humankind into loving ourselves,

To finding our true selves…

and to love life enough to passionately desire peace.

We acknowledge, Creator, that peace requires us to open our souls

To the work of creating it, first within, and then in action.

Let us pray:

Peace for me. **Peace for me.**

Peace for you. **Peace for you.**

Peace for all relatives and friends.

**Peace for all we have trouble with.**

Peace for enemies.

**Peace for those we love, and those who love us.**

Peace for the peoples of the earth.

**Peace for the creatures of the water, sky and Earth.**

Peace for the planets and galaxies.

**Peace in the black holes of space.**

Peace in the whole universe and beyond!

**Peace for what is known, and undiscovered.**

Creator God of the universe and of the known and unknown,

Hear our passion for peace. Amen

and hear our prayers as we repeat together the Prayer of Jesus:

**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 them 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 – VU # 61 Of the Father’s Love Begotten (verses 1, 4 & 5)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98ie4a4tXvE>

Of the Father’s love begotten

ere the worlds began to be,

Christ is Alpha and Omega,

Christ the source, the ending he,

of the things that are and have been

and that future years shall see,

evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers in old time

chanted of with one accord,

whom the voices of the prophets

promised in their faithful word;

now he shines, the long-expected;

let creation praise its Lord,

evermore and evermore.

O ye heights of heaven, adore him,

angel hosts, his praises sing;

powers, dominions, bow before him,

and extol our God and King;

let no tongue on earth be silent,

every voice in concert ring,

evermore and evermore.

**COMMISSIONING --** *David Sparks, adapted for this use*

When Jesus said, “The realm of God is at hand”

He was referring to both present and future times.

And so we live in the realm,

And we anticipate what lies ahead.

The Realm of God is at hand;

**we will prepare faithfully.**

The Realm of God is at hand;

**we will work for peace and justice.**

The Realm of God is at hand;

**we will seek reconciliation and healing.**

The Realm of God is at hand;

**we will work to end prejudice.**

The Realm of God is at hand;

**we will share grace and compassion.**

The Realm of God is at hand;

**we will have hope at last.**

The Realm of God is at hand;

**we go out in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

**EXTINGUISH THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**SUNG BLESSING – VU p# 884 You Shall Go Out with Joy**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up3AKJ2PxiU>

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace;

the mountains and the hills will break forth before you;

there’ll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field

will clap, will clap their hands!

And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, (clap, clap)

the trees of the field will clap their hands, (clap, clap)

the trees of the field will clap their hands, (clap, clap)

while you go out with joy.

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