**Covenant**

***The United Church of Canada***

a safe place for all people to worship

Minister: Laura Hutchison

**COVENANT UNITED CHURCH**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2025**

**SEASON OF EPIPHANY – BAPTISM OF JESUS**



*(Ringing 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! Coffee this morning is hosted by Carol Third & Evelyn Glazier. Volunteering February 2nd will be David Krupka & Paul Kleinhuis. If you are willing to help, please contact Heather.

 WOW (Women on Wednesdays) will be meeting at 11:30 am, January 15th at Pizza Hut. Please let Heather or Veronica know if you plan on attending so we can plan accordingly.

 The next church council meeting will be held on January 22nd at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

 Prayer Shawl will meet on January 23rd from 1:00 until 3:00. All are welcome.

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

  Red Solo Cup homemade soups are available in the kitchen freezer. $ 5.00 each.

 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:

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

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE --** *David Sparks, Summerland, B.C*

Comfort in sorrow, **the light of Christ.**

Challenge in lethargy, **the light of Christ.**

Courage in uncertainty, **the light of Christ.**

Hope when all else fails, **the light of Christ.**

**(Ringing the chime)**

**CENTERING**

**CALL TO WORSHIP --** *Richard Bott, Grace U.C., Burlington, Ont.*

We come to the water...

**the water of birth and rebirth.**

We come to the water...

**to celebrate life and life abundant.**

We come to the water...

**knowing that it is blessed,**

**knowing that we are blessed,**

**knowing that God is with us.**

We come to the table...

**the table of remembrance.**

We come to the table...

**to eat and to drink.**

We come to the table...

**to be refreshed and renewed,**

**to be fed in body and spirit.**

We come to the table...

**knowing that it is blessed,**

**knowing that we are blessed,**

**knowing that God is with us.**

Yesterday. Today. Forever.

**Amen.**

**PRAYER OF APROACH --** *Wendy MacLean, Brockville, Ont.*

**HYMN** **– MV # 161 I Have Called You by Your Name**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0R35mVzftE>

I have called you by your name, you are mine;

I have gifted you and ask you now to shine.

I will not abandon you; all my promises are true.

You are gifted, called, and chosen; you are mine.

I will help you learn my name as you go;

read it written in my people, help them grow.

Pour the water in my name, speak the word your soul can claim,

offer Jesus’ body given long ago.

I know you will need my touch as you go;

feel it pulsing in creation’s ebb and flow.

Like the woman reaching out, choosing faith in spite of doubt,

hold the hem of Jesus’ robe, then let it go.

I have given you a name, it is mine;

I have given you my Spirit as a sign.

With my wonder in your soul, make my wounded children whole;

go and tell my precious people they are mine.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION --** *(adapted from R. Wardlaw, for the gathering)*

**MINUTE FOR MISSION**

Keeping hope in impossible situations



Project Ploughshares is a Canadian peace research institute with a focus on disarmament efforts and international security. It is also one of our dedicated Mission and Service partners. Project Ploughshares’ important efforts come with many barriers, including discouragement, pushback, and regular exposure to mentally draining work.

Duncan Etches started his journey with Project Ploughshares as a supporter. When he saw an opportunity to be The United Church of Canada representative on the management committee, he felt it was time to step into the key role. He comments on how wise and inspirational the whole team is, sharing that “they keep hope in impossible situations.”

Project Ploughshares includes people from diverse backgrounds who are all deeply committed to making the world a better place. Rooted in the ethics of Christianity—peace, reconciliation, and justice—their work connects with people inside and outside faith communities. Members are respected and invited to be part of important conversations.

Your support through Mission and Service provides encouragement and hope to leaders of Project Ploughshares, a vital connection point for those passionate about global peace and security. Thank you.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Isaiah 43:1-7** – New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

**Psalm 29** (VU pp. 755–756)

Refrain: **Glory, glory, glory to our God!**

Ascribe to God, you powers of heaven,

Ascribe to God all Glory and strength!

**Ascribe due honour to God’s holy name,**

**And worship in the beauty of holiness. R**

God’s voice is over the waters,

God’s glory thundering across the great waters.

**God’s voice is power,**

**God’s voice is full of majesty.**

God’s voice shatters the cedars,

Splinters the cedars of Lebanon.

**God’s voice makes Lebanon skip like a calf,**

**Mount Herman stampede like a wild young bull.**

God’s voice forks into tongues of fire,

God’s voice shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

**God’s voice causes the oaks to whirl,**

**Stripping the forest bare;**

**And in the temple, all cry “Glory!” R**

God sits enthroned above the waters,

**God is enthroned as sovereign forever.**

You give strength to your people, O God.

**Now, give to your people**

**the blessing of peace. R**

**Acts 8:14-17** – New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

**Luke 3:15-17** – New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

**Luke 3:21-22** – New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

**HYMN – VU # 100 When Jesus Comes to be Baptized**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlAua1JwdPQ>

When Jesus comes to be baptized,

he leaves the hidden years behind,

the years of safety and of peace,

to bear the sins of humankind.

The Spirit of the Lord comes down,

anoints the Christ to suffering,

to preach the word, to free the bound,

and to the mourner, comfort bring.

He will not quench the dying flame,

and what is bruised he will not break,

but heal the wound injustice dealt,

and out of death his triumph make.

O Spirit help us be like Christ:

to live in love and charity,

to walk in truth and justice now,

and grow in Christian dignity.

We praise you, God, source of all life,

we praise you, Christ, eternal Word,

we praise you, Spirit, gracious gift;

your triune presence fills our world.

**REFLECTING**

**OFFERING FOR THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY**

**INVITATION: As an act of thanksgiving, we respond to God’s love by bringing our gifts of time, energy, and skills, our offerings of life and love.**

**DOXOLOGY – MV # 27 Creator God You Gave Us Life** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9ZOmMQeYmU>

Creator God you gave us life,

your image formed within our souls,

yet through the mist of time and space,

we search for that which makes us whole.

**Through hands that paint majestic skies,**

**and voices chanting melody,**

**with words that reach beyond the page,**

**we comprehend your mystery.**

In ev’ry flow’r and ev’ry tree,

we see your great diversity,

yet greater still we see your love,

expressed in our humanity. **(R)**

When with our hearts, our hands our minds,

we share our gifts with all the world,

our spirits soar beyond the veil,

to touch the very face of God. **(R)**

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION --**

– *by Darrell Reine*

For the gifts you have given,

**we give you thanks, O God.**

For the gifts that we have the opportunity to give,

**we give you thanks, O God.**

Bless these gifts for the work of your church,

**here and in the world, where all may know your love.**

**Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**COMMUNION LITURGY** – *by Richard Bott, St. Andrew’s U.C., Maple Ridge, B.C.*

**INVITATION** **--**

**RESPONSE --**  **MV #196 We Will Take What You Offer** *(three times)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oInB7yubJKU>

We will take what you offer, we will live by your word;

We will love one another and be fed by you, Lord.

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

God is with you.

**God is with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**Lift up your hearts.**

Give thanks to God!

**Give thanks to God!**

God, you dreamed a wonderful dream—

and into that dream,

you brought all things that exist:

**the rocks, the water, the air, the fire,**

**plants of all shapes and sizes,**

**animals that fly in the air,**

**or move on or under the ground,**

**or swish in the sea.**

You looked at it all and said,

**This is good!**

It was good. It is good.

But, sometimes, people have forgotten that you created all things in love.

Sometimes, even now, people forget that you created all things in love.

**Over and over, we did things that were unloving—**

**of ourselves, of our neighbours, and of you.**

You sent wise youth and wise elders,

to try to help us to slow down and listen to you.

You sent prophets and judges, teachers and preachers,

to try to call us back to your love.

**Sometimes we listened.**

**Sometimes we ignored them.**

**Sometimes we pushed them away.**

**Sometimes we still do.**

But, when the time was right,

you decided to send someone else

to your people.

Jesus of Nazareth.

Born like us, growing up with us,

teaching and preaching and, most of all,

loving us—

he tried to show us

how to live your kingdom—

how to live your love.

He laughed with those who laughed,

and cried with those who cried;

he invited everyone—everyone—

to eat together at your table of love!

**Today we pray for all who need your presence,**

**we pray for all who need your love,**

**we pray, asking you to help us**

**to be your hands in the world,**

**sharing your love everywhere.**

**We pray for...** *(invite people to name those in need)*

With all of the angels and saints,

with all of our grandparents and wise ones, past and present,

we celebrate Christ’s presence with all creation:

SING: VU p. 932 “Sanctus and Benedictus”

*(no video is available)*

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God of power and might**

**Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the One who comes in your name.**

**Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.**

God of all,

we celebrate Jesus’ birth,

we remember his teaching,

we commemorate his death and resurrection,

**and we wait, with hope,**

**for Christ’s coming again—**

**alive in our lives,**

**now and forevermore!**

We ask that you might fill

this bread, this cup, and all people, everywhere,

with your Spirit.

As we eat and drink,

help us to remember the change

Jesus brought to people’s lives,

and help us to remember the change

Christ brings each and every day.

May the bread we eat

and the juice we drink

help us to be one with all of Christ’s disciples,

help us to be one with all of creation,

now and always.

On the night before Jesus was taken to his death,

he gathered with his friends and disciples.

He took a loaf of bread, gave thanks to you,

and then he broke it, saying,

“This is my body, given for you. Each time you eat this bread, remember me.”

Each time you eat or drink ordinary things like bread, water, or juice…

He took a cup of wine, again gave thanks,

and then gave it to his disciples, saying,

“This is my promise—my covenant for now and forever—in my life-blood.

You are forgiven. All are forgiven!

Each time you drink like this, remember me.”

**So we eat.**

**So we drink.**

**So we remember.**

Let us sing the prayer that Jesus gave to all of his disciples:

SING: VU 960 “Our Father…”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvSKS8QgLqw>

**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.**

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

all power and glory are yours,

now and forever, Holy God!

And the people said,

**Amen.**

Come now, for all things are ready.

*(the elements are shared)*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Thank you, God,**

**for inviting us to your table.**

**Thank you, for sharing Jesus—**

**back then and right now.**

**As you strengthen our faith,**

**help us to be your love**

**in the world. Amen!**

**RESPONSE** **– MV # 202 Bread for the Journey**

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

Bread for the journey, food for the way.

Cup of God’s blessing, tomorrow, today.

Bread for the journey, food for the way.

Cup of God’s blessing, tomorrow, today.

**COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING**

On your way out of the sanctuary this morning you will pass by a font, with water. Please take a moment to be touched by the water.

I will pour the water for you. Paper towels are provided.

When you touch the water, remember the ritual we have just participated in with the bread and the juice; and remember once again the baptism of Jesus, and the knowledge that you are the Body of Christ, and this world is where your ministry takes place.

Go in the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil your calling as people touched by grace. Amen.

**EXTINGUISH THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**SENDING SONG – HYMN MV # 209 Go Make a Diff’rence**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VBWsFrV_G4>

**Go make a diff’rence. We can make a diff’rence.**

**Go make a diff’rence in the world.**

**Go make a diff’rence. We can make a diff’rence.**

**Go make a diff’rence in the world.**

We are the salt of the earth, called to let the people see

the love of God for you and me.

We are the light of the world, not to be hidden but be seen.

Go make a diff’rence in the world. **(R)**

We are the hands of Christ reaching out to those in need,

the face of God for all to see.

We are the spirit of hope; we are the voice of peace.

Go make a diff’rence in the world. **(R)**

So let your love shine on, let it shine for all to see.

Go make a diff’rence in the world.

And the spirit of Christ will be with us as we go.

Go make a diff’rence in the world. **(R)**

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