

May 5, 2024  
Sixth Sunday of Easter

**We Gather In God's Presence**

**Prelude:** "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" AZMON Music: Carl G. Glaser

**Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Preparing Our Hearts for Worship**

**Call to Worship**

We gather to worship you and to hear your word for us.

**We want to learn and grow to be ever more  
like the people You created us to be.**

We pray that you will pour out your Spirit upon us,  
**to inspire us, to embolden us, to empower us  
to live lives of righteousness.**

Join us in our worship,

**that we may be one with you, and, through you,  
that we may be one with all peoples.**

**Hymn: VU 158** "Christ Is Alive" Words: Brian Wren; Music: Thomas Williams 1789; Music: Public Domain  
Words © 1975 Hope Publishing Company OneLicense.net A620168, CCLI 11438349

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
but saving, healing, here and now,  
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift, and war,  
where colour, scorn, or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,  
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,  
and find the way, the life, the truth,  
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

## **Opening Prayer**

Holy One, you fall upon us like pollen from the tree blossoms, righteous and unrighteous alike. You plant your gifts in our hearts and in our souls, righteous and unrighteous alike. We who feel we are righteous think it unfair that you bless those we judge to be unrighteous. How dare you! Yet, You created us all, and bless us all, no matter what. Help us to see that which we have in common and not that which separates us; help us to accept and love one another as you love us - unconditionally; help us to be one in You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **We Are Blessed By God**

### **A Song of Faith** *(page 3-4)*

We offer worship

as an outpouring of gratitude and awe  
and a practice of opening ourselves  
to God's still, small voice of comfort,  
to God's rushing whirlwind of challenge.

Through word, music, art, and sacrament,  
in community and in solitude,

God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.

We sing with trust.

Scripture is our song for the journey, the living word

passed on from generation to generation

to guide and inspire,

that we might wrestle a holy revelation for our time and place  
from the human experiences

and cultural assumptions of another era.

God calls us to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

The Spirit breathes revelatory power into scripture,

bestowing upon it a unique and normative place  
in the life of the community.

The Spirit judges us critically when we abuse scripture

by interpreting it narrow-mindedly,

using it as a tool of oppression, exclusion, or hatred.

The wholeness of scripture testifies

to the oneness and faithfulness of God.

The multiplicity of scripture testifies to its depth:

two testaments, four gospels,

contrasting points of view held in tension –

all a faithful witness to the One and Triune God,

the Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

**Hymn VU 401** "Worship the Lord" Words: Fred Kaan 1972; Music: Ron Klusmeier 1977;

Words © 1974 Hope Publishing Company; Music © 1977 Ron Klusmeier OneLicense.net A620168

Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!

Raising our hands as a sign of rejoicing,  
and with our lips our togetherness voicing,  
giving ourselves to a life of creativeness,  
worship and work must be one!

Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!

Praying and training that we be a blessing,  
and by our handiwork daily confessing:  
we are committed to serving humanity,  
worship and work must be one!

Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!

Called to be partners with God in creation,  
honouring Christ as the Lord of the nation,  
we must be ready for risk and for sacrifice,  
worship and work must be one!

Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!

Bring the bread and the wine to the table,  
asking that we may be led and enabled,  
truly united to build new communities,  
worship and work must be one!

Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!

Now in response to the life you are giving,  
help us, Creator, to offer our living,  
seeking a just and a healing society,  
worship and work must be one!

Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!

## Psalm 98 VU 818

**R: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**

Sing to God a new song,

**for God has done marvellous things.**

Your right hand and your holy arm have brought victory.

**You have made known your salvation,  
and revealed before the nations your saving power.**

You have remembered your steadfast love  
and faithfulness to the house of Israel;

**all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**

**R: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;

**break into joyous praise, sing psalms.**

Sing psalms to God with the harp,

**with the harp and melodious voice.**

With trumpets, and the sound of the horn

**make a joyful noise before our sovereign God.**

**R: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,

**the world, and its inhabitants.**

Let the rivers clap their hands,

**the hills sing together for joy before God.**

You come to judge the earth, O God,

**to judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.**

**R: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**

### **Scripture: Acts 10:44-48 Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit**

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

*The other readings for this week are: **1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17.** You can look them up on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and search for the passage..... in the translation of your preference.*

**Meditation:** "Boundaries, shmoundaries!"

**Hymn MV 145** "Draw the Circle Wide" Words and Music: Gordon Light 1994; arrangement: Michael Bloss 1998

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Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.

Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

God the still-point of the circle,  
'round whom all creation turns;  
nothing lost, but held forever,  
in God's gracious arms.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Let our hearts touch far horizons,  
so encompass great and small;  
let our loving know no borders,  
faithful to God's call.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Let the dreams we dream be larger,  
than we've ever dreamed before;  
let the dreams of Christ be in us,  
open every door.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

### **We Respond To God's Grace**

#### **Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

In the gospel lesson today Jesus commands us to "love one another as [Jesus has] loved [us.]" And how did Jesus love us? Unconditionally! We did not volunteer. We did not make the choice. We were chosen, by God, and we have been appointed, by God, to bear fruit that lasts. And what is that kind of fruit? Not the wax banana, apple, and orange in the 1950's fruit basket, but the actions that transform lives...you know, things like pushing for all people around the world to be treated with dignity and respect, and to have access to a living wage, decent appropriate shelter, clean safe drinking water, food, health care, and so on. This is the work we do and support through our tithes and offerings.

**Offertory Hymn** "The Festival Doxology" (tune 217 VU) Words: Brian Arthur Wren

Music: Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Cologne 1623, harmonized Ralph Vaughn Williams 1906

Words: Hope Publishing Company Music: Public Domain OneLicense.net A620168

Praise God the Giver and the Gift;  
All hearts and voices now uplift:  
Christ is risen! Alleluia!  
Creator, Christ and Spirit One  
From whom new life and joy have come:  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

Holy One, may all that we offer, time, skill, and yes, even money, be used to transform lives and to transform this world into something that more closely resembles your greatest hopes and dreams for it. May all that we offer be a blessing to those we love, and to those we find unlovable. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer**

O God, our Creator, our Centre, our Friend, we thank you: for the blessings of life, for those who are dear to us, for those we love but have now died, and for all who have helped and influenced us. Most of all we thank you for the faith that is in us, for our awareness of you, and our hope in you. Lord, hear our prayers:

We pray for your church and its varied ministries: ministers and laity, outreach ministries, youth leaders, musicians, preachers, teachers, theologians and dreamers, for all who have heard your call, raised their hand and heart in answer, and taken a step on your path. This week we pray for Grace United Church in Sarnia, and their spiritual leader, the Rev. Dr. Kenji Marui.

We pray for your Creation. May we learn to treat it with reverence; may we learn to live with respect within the sacred web of life you created.

We pray for all the peoples of this earth, especially this day we pray for the people of India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, and, on this Red Dress Day, we also pray for all of the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two spirited people in this country, and their loved ones who are tortured by not knowing what became of their loved ones, or who mourn their death.

We pray for all who mourn, especially the friends and family of the Rev. Father Titus Ackbarali.

We pray for all who are ill or dying, awaiting medical intervention or recovering from treatment, especially, Janet..... and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

We gather all of these prayers and lift them up to you in the words that Jesus taught us,

**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  
who 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 649** "Walk with Me" Words and Music: John S. Rice Arrangement: John Fluker

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Walk with me, I will walk with you  
and build the land that God has planned  
where love shines through.

When Moses heard the call of God  
he said, "Lord, don't send me."  
But God told Moses, "You're the one  
to set my people free."

Walk with me, I will walk with you  
and build the land that God has planned  
where love shines through.

Now Peter was a most unlikely  
man to lead the flock;  
but Jesus knew his holiness  
and he became the Rock.

Walk with me, I will walk with you  
and build the land that God has planned  
where love shines through.

Young Mary Magdalene was sure  
her life could be much more,  
and by her faith she dared to let  
God's love unlock the door.

Walk with me, I will walk with you  
and build the land that God has planned  
where love shines through.

And when you share your faith with me  
and work for life made new,  
the witness of your faithfulness  
calls me to walk with you.

Walk with me, I will walk with you  
and build the land that God has planned  
where love shines through.

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

As God spoke, through Peter, to the hearts of all who listened,

**God has spoken to our hearts in worship today.**

As Jesus called Peter's listeners to become disciples,

**Jesus reaffirms his call to us, to be disciples, learners of Jesus' way of life.**

As the Holy Spirit fell on those gathered to listen to Peter,

**The Holy Spirit has fallen on us today,  
to inspire us, to encourage us, to empower us  
to live lives of righteousness,  
with justice and compassion  
for those we share the gift of life with.**

**Response: VU 424** "May the God of Hope Go with Us" vs. 1 Words: (vs. 1) Alvin Schutmaat 1984

Music: Argentine Folk Melody Words and Music: Public Domain

May the God of hope go with us every day,  
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.

May the God of justice speed us on our way,  
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace, singing, share our joy with all,  
working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

**Postlude:** "Rigaudon" Andre Campra (1660-1744)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Central Board** meets Wednesday, May 15 to discuss future direction.

**Antler River Watershed Regional Council** Annual Spring Meeting runs Friday, May 24 to Sunday, May 26 at the Unifor Family Centre in Port Elgin.

## **LECTIONARY READINGS:**

May 12 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19