

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### COMMUNITY WELCOME [REV MERVINS GREETING](#)

- Tawow, Bienvenue, Welcome to this time of worship. While we continue to join remotely in our individual or family places of social isolation and physical distancing, please be mindful that in this moment we are joining in a spiritual way with the entire community of St. Albert United Church and others who are also participating in this same worship opportunity from their homes and places of safe physical distancing.

#### **- Items to gather together before beginning:**

➤ **Bread and beverage for communion**

➤ ***A Voices United a More Voices* hymn book if you have one**

- As you and/or your family move through the service, I invite you to read aloud the words of the prayers, readings, etc. Even if you are alone, speaking the words aloud can help internalize and deepen the worship experience. If there are other loved ones gathered with you, I invite you to share the leader parts with all who are comfortable with and able to read.

- In addition, at points in the service below there will be links to YouTube videos of an opening, the All Ages Time, the Message and celebration of Communion. There will also be links to some music/sung hymns that unfortunately are not local but are legally accessible on the internet. I have included them because we are all aware that music is such an important aspect of worshiping. When you click on these links you may have to shut down the ads that pop up first and close the link as soon as the hymn is finished before it goes to another that may or may not be appropriate.

# WELCOME TO OUR VIRTUAL WORSHIP AND LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

## CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In the midst of our garden of memories, we hear a voice.

**All: Is it the voice of one we know?**

One: Through the virtual haze, we are called to live life in a new way.

**All: Can we trust that this is the voice of Jesus?**

One: With the rising sun our vision becomes clearer.

**All: The Risen Christ is present nourishing our lives.**

One: Being offered life-giving nourishment, are we open to love?

**All: We come to worship the One who invites us to feed all creation with compassion and hope.**

## PRAYER OF APPROACH (in unison)

**God of resurrection surprise – amaze us again this morning with the brilliance of your Spirit of new and renewed life breaking into all the isolated places of our lives where we need direction and encouragement. With the buds that are appearing on the trees, the melodies of returning songbirds, and the warmth of sunny days, may we be inspired to find creative ways of shining the support of glad and generous hearts within our community even as we physically distance from one another. May your Spirit be heard in the readings proclaimed; may your Spirit be known in the meditations of our hearts, may your Spirit be revealed in the faithfulness of our lives. Amen.**

HYMN: [Behold, Behold, I Make All Things New](#)

(If you would like to sing along the words can be found at #115 of More

Voices. The picture is not the best but it is the hymn we know.)

TIME FOR ALL AGES: [ALL AGES TIME](#)

HYMN: [I Am the Church, You Are the Church, We Are the Church Together](#) (Words on video)

SCRIPTURE READINGS - Please share the reading among those who gather physically with you.

**Acts 2:42-47** (The Scripture quotation contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and are used by permission. All rights reserved.)

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**John 10:1-10** (The Scripture quotation contained herein are from The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language, copyright © 2002, by Eugene H. Peterson. All rights reserved.)

**1** "Let me set this before you as plainly as I can. If a person climbs over or through the fence of a sheep pen instead of going through the gate, you know he's up to no good - a sheep rustler! **2** The shepherd walks right up to the gate. **3** The gatekeeper opens the gate to him and the sheep recognize his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

**4** When he gets them all out, he leads them and they follow because they are familiar with his voice. **5** They won't follow a stranger's voice but will scatter because they aren't used to the sound of it." **6** Jesus told this simple story, but they had no idea what he was talking about.

**7** So he tried again. "I'll be explicit, then. I am the Gate for the sheep. **8** All those others are up to no good - sheep stealers, every one of them. But the sheep didn't listen to them. **9** I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for - will freely go in and out, and find pasture. **10** A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

**11** "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary. **12** A hired man is not a real shepherd. The sheep mean nothing to him. He sees a wolf come and runs for it, leaving the sheep to be ravaged and scattered by the wolf. **13** He's only in it for the money. The sheep don't matter to him. **14** "I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own sheep and my own sheep know me. **15** In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father. I put the sheep before myself, sacrificing myself if necessary. **16** You need to know that I have other sheep in addition to those in this pen. I need to gather and bring them, too. They'll also recognize my voice. Then it will be one flock, one Shepherd.

SILENT REFLECTION: *Please take time to reflect on all we have heard.*

ANTHEM: [Be Thou My Vision](#)

MESSAGE: [Abundant Life in Community that Cares](#)

by Rev. Mervin Gallant

## SHARING OF GIFTS

Thank you to all of you for the various ways in which you continue to support the ongoing ministry of St Albert United Church through sharing your gifts of time, connection, prayer, talent and resources with God's people. Please, consider continuing to support agencies and associations which have relied on your financial support prior to these changing world circumstances. We recognize that during these difficult times, personal finances may be severely diminished. However, please consider contributing financially as you are able to support St. Albert United Church's ministry. Expenses continue even with the suspension of services and operations.

Please check the church website for ways in which you can support ministry with time, talents and resources.

<https://stalbertunited.ca/donations/>

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

**In this moment of Covid-19, sheltering in place, dealing with uncertainty and grief, and circumstances beyond our imagining only a couple of months ago, we offer ourselves to the Good Shepherd who offers us the safety of sheltered embrace and the promise of nourishment in green pastures. In our sharing of time, talent and treasure even in these uncertain times, may we be one with those early believers who were together and had all things in common, so that all in our own time will know the safety, nourishment and love of the Good Shepherd. Amen.**

HYMN: [\*One Bread, One Body\*](#)

(If you would like to sing along the words can be found at #467 of Voices United.)

## SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION: [SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION](#)

### WELCOMING ALL TO THE TABLE

One: Because all of our bread has its source in one Creator, we who are many and join this meal from varied venues, are one body,

**All: ... for we all partake of the bread of God.**

One: In Christ, God breaks down the walls that make us strangers to ourselves and erases the virtual distance that divides us from one another.

**All: We are the body of Christ.**

Mervin: At this table we bear witness to our faith.

**All: At this table, God brings wholeness out of brokenness, and healing to our world.**

One: Let us break bread together.

### GREAT THANKSGIVING PRAYER

One: God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Open your hearts.

**We gladly open them to God.**

Let us give thanks to God.

**It is good to give thanks and praise.**

One: It is good to bless and thank you, God, Source of life and love.

We give thanks for your many gifts: for the gift of creation, for the renewal of summer light and warmth and recreation, for the renewal of our hearts made whole in your grace.

**We give thanks for the gift of new life we experience in your Spirit, as time and again you reorient your people, enabling us to see the world around us with new eyes, to discover the new life you offer through creation as we spend more time in its midst during this spring season.**

One: We give thanks for the witness of Jesus, who gave himself for the realization of that new life. In each moment of time your vision of beauty surrounds us. Your love is stronger than death; Jesus is risen and present with us wherever we journey. And so we join all creation in praise:

**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.**

*(see More Voices #203)*

One: Life-giving God, we pray in memory of Jesus who made your dream known in countless meals: meals shared like a picnic with crowds on a hillside, a final meal shared with his friends on the night before his death, meals of risen presence restoring them to hope.

In Jesus' name we pray, take this bread, Living One:

**fill it with the story of empty tomb.**

Take this wine, Living One:

**let it echo with the whisper of resurrection.**

One: Take this table, Living One:

**All: let it be the place where people gather from their times of communing with all that you have created.**

One: Take this community, Living One:

**All: infuse it with fresh spirit, living hope, risen life that is shared wherever we journey.**

One: In you, we rise to new life and so we can proclaim:

**Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!**

One: Renewing God, as we break bread together, we pray for your gift of new life in the world:

where there is discord and violence, may there be peace;

where there is oppression, may true justice reign;

where people are struggling with illness, may they know your healing love;

where people are burdened with grief, may hope in your new life be

restored; where we are all socially isolated and physically distanced from

one another, may virtual connections of electronic means be embraced as

very real expressions of love and support that we can hold in our hearts as

inspiration to greet each new day with hope.

**Send your Spirit upon us. May our sharing in this meal renew us in your grace. Enliven us in your Spirit that we may be a sign of your promise of life in the world.**

One: May we ever sing your praise: through Your Word made flesh, in the power of your life-giving Spirit, you are glorified God, now and forever, as we pray together this paraphrase of the Jesus prayer from New Zealand:

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-Giver, Source of all that is and shall be. Father and Mother of us all, loving God in whom is heaven: the hallowing of your name echo through the Universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world. Your heavenly will be done by all created beings. Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.**

## PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

### PREPARING THE TABLE:

One: The body of Christ,

**All: the bread of life.**

One: The lifeblood of Christ,

**All: the cup of blessing.**

One: The banquet is ready.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

## SHARING THE MEAL

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (*in unison*)

**We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world united in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.**

### BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH (*in unison*)

Let us go from this virtual worship with our eyes open to God's love and grace surrounding us. Let our ears be open to hear the Good Shepherd calling us to new challenges. Let our imaginations be open to the new possibilities, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that enable us to experience and share abundant life.

### SENDING HYMN: [Deep in our Hearts](#)

(If you would like to sing along the words can be found at #158 of More Voices.)

**SPEAKER AFTER WORSHIP:** If we had been in our church building this week, Stephanie Harpe would have been our special guest to help us recognize Red Dress Sunday in remembrance of all the murdered and missing women and girls within the Indigenous Community and in

solidarity with efforts to find healing, hope and justice for First Nation, Metis and Inuit peoples across our country. Please consider grabbing a coffee or bite of lunch and then come back and listen to the TED TALK that Stephanie recorded in Grande Prairie and placed on YouTube. Thank you to Marilyn McSporran for getting Stephanie's permission to share the video. It is less than 15 minutes long.

[Indigenous Suffering & Survival to Success | Stephanie Harpe | TEDxGrandePrairie](#)