

Dunsford United Church
Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024
Pulpit Presider: Rev. Anne Hepburn

†= stand as you are able

WELCOME AND CELEBRATIONS (Birthdays/Anniversaries, etc.)

† GATHERING HYMN: VU#161 "Welcome Happy Morning" (J. Ellerton)

- 1 Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today:
come then, True and Faithful, now fulfil your word;
this is your third morning: rise, O buried Lord!
R Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today!

- 2 Earth with joyful welcome clothes itself for spring;
greeted with life reviving our returning king:
flowers in every pasture, leaves on every bough,
speak of sorrows ended; Jesus triumphs now! *R*

- 3 Author and sustainer, source of life and breath;
you for our salvation trod the path of death:
Jesus Christ is living, God for evermore! Now let all creation hail him and adore. *R*

- 4 Loose our souls imprisoned, bound with Satan's chain;
all that now is fallen, raise to life again!
Show your face in brightness, shine the whole world through;
hope returns with daybreak, life returns with you. *R*

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Easter God, the wick is ignited and the light of hope and transformation is before us. How amazing that a single beam of light can change our way of experiencing life. May we rest in the glow of Christ's love ever radiating sparks of peace and a new dawn. Amen

Written by Laura J Turnbull, Gatherings, 2024 p. 41. Used with permission.

LIGHTING THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CANDLE and the
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LANDS (Unison)

We acknowledge, honour and respect this land and the Anishinaabe / Mississauga peoples with whom Treaty 20, Williams treaty, was signed, on the lands where we are. We acknowledge and give thanks for the lands and people of treaties and unceded territories of all who are worshipping. It is up to all of us to live into truth, respect and reconciliation with all our relations.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ is risen! What a glorious day!

Christ is risen indeed!

Our lives are forever changed!

New life is all around us.

Stop and experience the beauty.

Where once there was death, now there is life!

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!!

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† HYMN: VU #155 "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" (Lyra Davidica)

- 1 Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah! our triumphant holy day, hallelujah!
who did once, upon the cross, hallelujah! suffer to redeem our loss. Hallelujah!
- 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing hallelujah! unto Christ,
our heavenly King, hallelujah! who endured the cross and grave, hallelujah!
sinners to redeem and save. Hallelujah!
- 3 But the pains which he endured, hallelujah!
our salvation have procured; hallelujah!
now above the sky he's King, hallelujah! where the angels ever sing. Hallelujah!
- 4 Sing we to our God above, hallelujah! praise eternal as God's love; hallelujah!
praise our God, ye heavenly host, hallelujah! praise the Son and Holy Ghost. Hallelujah!

OPENING PRAYER (together)

God of Resurrection

You have rolled the stone away

And the tomb of our world has been opened wide.

With the dawn has come a new creation.

Let our celebration today:

Empty our tombs,

Renew our lives,

And release your power.

Through the risen Christ we pray. Amen

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: "They Could Not" Sylvia Van Belle

INVITATION TO GIVE: Let us bring forward the offering.

† HYMN OF DEDICATION: VU #541 (Words: Thomas Ken)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known: Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

On this most Holy of Sundays, we celebrate new life in Jesus, the risen Christ.

While all Sundays are effectively mini celebrations of Easter, this one is the original, the centre of our worship.

How appropriate then that we are here to remember Jesus and his acts of service to those in need.

Through this offering we are given an opportunity to give thanks to God for then sacrificial gift of His precious only child. We are given an opportunity to make a difference in the life of the world just as Jesus did in his time. May our gifts be given with an open heart. **Amen.**

FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART: What is new life?

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - An account of Jesus' resurrection appearances
(Read by Sylvia)

The Resurrection of Christ

15 Now I want you to understand, brothers and sisters, the good news^[a] that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures ⁴ and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.^[b] ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you believed.

Gospel: John 20:1-18 Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene (Read by Anne)

The Resurrection of Jesus

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look^[a] into the tomb, ¹² and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir,^[b] if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew,^[c] “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, “Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and she told them that he had said these things to her.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: “Alive (Mary Magdalene”) Christena-Lynn Erglis

CHILDREN LEAVE FOR JUNIOR CHURCH

† HYMN: VU #173 “Thine is the Glory” (Edmond L. Budry)

- 1 Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
 endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
 Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
 kept the folded grave-clothes where the body lay.
 Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
 endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

- 2 Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb! Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
 Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
 for the Lord now liveth: death hath lost its sting. R

- 3 No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
 life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;
 make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love;
 bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above. R

MESSAGE: New Life in the World

Most of you have listened to a lot of Easter sermons over the years.
The central message is pretty predictable isn't it?

"Christ's resurrection offers us new life". We have all heard this message over the years in varied ways. So I thought that we could spend some time looking at Easter as our lived experience on earth, because sometimes Easter as a spiritual message seems distant.

But to us, as followers of Jesus, it helps to bring the Gospel message down to our level. Easter is rich with themes: see the screen and how they are laid out:

On the left side of the ledger:		And on the right side:
1. Death	-	(New) Life
2. Lost	-	Found
3. Grief	-	Joy

Of course, to our Sunday school members, Easter is more about the egg hunt. For them the themes are: Life, Found, Joy. That order seems appropriate!

But as adults, we know and live rather more with the other side of the equation: Death, Loss, Grief.

Those are the sentiments of Holy Week:

The terror which followed the turbulent journey through Jesus's ministry and his arrival on a donkey to celebrate Passover; The wrenching fear leading up to Friday; The horror of his arrest; The public attempts to humiliate Him and drum up public support for his public torture and crucifixion; The numbing fear that his disciples felt, causing them to hide away; Finally, the confusion of the early morning at the tomb, followed by the joyful surprise of Christ's revelation to Mary.

Easter is the right side of the Ledger whereas Holy week represents the left side.

It would not be Easter if we did not account for the lead up to today.

It would not have been a "Good Friday" if Easter did not unfold as it did.

Most of us and our human family have walked some sort of Holy week in our journeys.

We have experienced pain, loss, suffering; both mental and emotional.

Some have experienced betrayal; most have had disappointments, lost dreams and smashed goals.

Life can be difficult. Sometimes the right side of the ledger seems far away.

Some examples:

#1 **Death to Life**

A few years ago one of my long time colleagues faced some serious health issues in her husband. He had been diagnosed with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) a couple of years ago. He managed well for a time until his condition declined rapidly. Faced with impending death, he qualified for a double lung transplant after medical assessments. They live in the USA, and fortunately have ample benefits from his work pre-retirement, plus excellent care at a local university medical center. He was soon a recipient of double lungs. The population of the USA being 10 times that of Canada, coupled with the prevalence of guns ensures that there are often organs available to those in need. Although the surgery was a success, he has experienced many life threatening complications. Most recently he ended up back in hospital with kidney failure. Thankfully he is stable and is well enough to anticipate with excitement the impending arrival of grandchild #1.

#2 **Lost to Found**

I know social media has its pitfalls but I am a follower. I joined Facebook when I graduated Emmanuel because it was a way for my classmates to stay connected. I am more recently on Instagram: again because it helps me follow some people who post there. This past week someone from Minden posted that his dog was lost. He posted the area and shared a pic of his dog. On Wednesday it was announced that the pet had been located and was safely home. Although I am sure that people would have looked out for the dog, it may have helped that the owner was the one who led a strong campaign to reopen the Minden ER. He has been very vocal looking out for the needs of his community and spending enormous time on this effort. No one could fail to know his name.

#3 **Grief to Joy**

Finally, using the ledger of Easter themes, this past week some distant friends of ours faced the left side of the ledger. Their daughter, 30 years old and working in BC as a social worker, died in a snowmobile accident. Although she died doing what she loved, she is never coming home again. Shocked and devastated, they flew out to Nanaimo with their other two children to deal with what had to be done.

And what they found was a community that knew and loved their daughter.

A celebration of life was held – organized by the community for the community and family, to acknowledge and honour her gifts, her personality, and her work. It was uplifting, generous and gracious. They are home now planning local gatherings for family and friends who knew her, to celebrate the life of the vibrant young woman as she was growing up.

Although they are still grief stricken, and will miss her forever, the joy of meeting those who cared so much that they spontaneously organized the first gathering will lessen their loss.

When we celebrate Easter, we celebrate the resilience of our spirits, the right side of the ledger. We feel the lightness of being. We feel the happiness of little moments. We feel the euphoria of relief. We feel the calm, steady side of goodness.

Easter is a gift - to us, to our future, to the big picture.

Whatever happens, we will move forward, we will be a faithful people together.

We will move from **Death, Loss and Grief to Life, Finding, Joy.**

And **that** is Easter. Hallelujah!!!

† HYMN: VU #958 "Halle, Halle, Halle"

Halle, Halle, Halle - lujah! Halle, Halle, Halle - lujah!

Halle, Halle, Halle - lujah! Hallelujah! Halle – lujah!

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

May God be with us.

God is here among us.

Let us open our hearts to God.

We open them to God and to one another.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We thank you God, creator of us all;

From the beginning you made the world and all its creatures.

You made people to live for you and for one another.

We praise you O God.

We praise you O God.

You created Adam and Eve and gave them a Garden;

You showed Noah a rainbow;

You gave Moses strength to free your people

And taught Miriam to sing;

You gave courage to Esther and loyalty to Ruth;

You gave David a harp to sing your praise,

And helped him defeat the giant.

We praise you O God.

We praise you O God.

Yet even they turned away from you too
And forgot about you as we do too.

But you did not forget.

You sent Jesus to the world
And to show how much you love us
And to bring us back to you again.

We praise you O God.

We praise you O God.

He came as one of us, first an infant then a child,
Later a youth, then an adult.

He rejoiced with those who rejoiced.

And wept with those who wept.

To the despairing he spoke a word of hope.

To the sick he gave healing,

To the hurting he was a friend.

Still people turned away from you.

They betrayed Jesus and nailed him to a cross

But he was lifted from the grave and restored to life,

That he might be with us and we with him, alive forevermore!

Therefore with all the saints of every time and place,
we join the angels in their praise:

Holy holy holy Lord

God of power and might

Heaven and earth are full of your glory

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We gather at this table to remember that
on the night before he died, Jesus ate with his friends,
he took a loaf of bread and after blessing it,
he broke it and gave it to them, saying:

“Take eat, this is my body broken for you.

Each time you do this, remember me.”

That same night Jesus took also took a cup,

And after giving thanks,

Passed it to his friends, saying:

“Drink. This cup poured out for you, is the promise of God.

Whenever you drink it, remember me”.

We remember Jesus's death and celebrate his resurrection;
 We await with hope his coming again to bring peace and justice to the earth.
 And we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Send O God your spirit upon us and what we do here,
 That we and these gifts, touched by your spirit,
 May be signs of life and love to one another, and to the world.
 Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ
 In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 All glory is yours, God most Holy, now and forever. **Amen**
From "Celebrate God's Presence" P. 243. Used with permission.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

SERVICE OF ELEMENTS

WE ARE SENT OUT IN FAITH TO SERVE

COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

Our worship time has ended and we rejoice in the miracle of the resurrection.
 With faith we proclaim Christ has risen. Hallelujah!
 May all you do and share, all that you are, declare the Good News!
 May God's love radiate through you. May the glory of the risen Christ be revealed within you.
 May the mystery of the Holy Spirit guide you this day and always. Amen
Written by Laura J. Turnbull Gatherings 2024 p. 49. Used with permission.

† CHORAL RESPONSE: “Go Now in Peace” (Words: D Besig and N Price)

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 He 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 watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. Amen, Amen, Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 7: Holy Humour Sunday with Rev. Anne. If you have church-clean jokes or anecdotes, bring them to share.

Volunteers are needed for:

- Vice Chair of the Board
- Spiritual Leadership Team Leader
- Leadership Development Team Leader

For information or job descriptions, please speak to John, Board Chair

- Jr. Church leaders - Vulnerable Sector Police Checks are required. Speak with Abigail for more information.

Milk bag Mats: The group meets in the Church on Wednesdays at 10 AM. All are welcome to make mats and enjoy some fellowship.

February Financials

Income: \$4,009.00

Expenses: \$4,823.20

Net Loss: \$ 814.20

Stewardship Second: As people of faith who are learning to give generously, how do we respond to the good news of Easter, remembering the angel's words, “Be not afraid”?

FROM THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

[E-ssentials: Wishing you a Blessed Holy Week and Easter \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

DUNSFORD UNITED CHURCH

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