

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH COMMUNITY OF FAITH

*A spiritual hub for
creativity, discovery and growth*



Sunday, April 21, 2024 ~ 10:00 a.m.

Minister
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St. Paul's United Church, Perth
Sunday April 21, 2024
The 4th Sunday in Easter Season
(Good Shepherd Sunday & Earth Day)



✠ *invites us to rise in body or spirit*

God Calls Us Together

Lighting the Christ, Affirm and Prayer Candles

One: We light the Christ candle as a sign that Christ's Spirit alights us all:

All: **this day, this moment, and every moment.**

One: We light the Affirm candle to remind us to be a place of belonging and acceptance,

All: **to learn and grow together in love that protects and celebrates and uplifts.**

One: The Prayer candle reminds us to hold one another in prayer:

All: **to raise prayers of thanks and concern for one another, and any in need.**

Gathering Song: "There Is Room for All" MV 62

There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing:

there is room for all sheltered in God's love.

And I rejoice and sing,

"My Refuge and my rock, in whom I trust."

There is room for all,

there is room for all.

All Our Relations: "Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren"

All God's Children (Affirming Statement)

Life of the Community

Piano Prelude: The Lord's My Shepherd - Irvine, arr. by Kendall

The Greeting for Easter Season

One: Christ is Risen!

All: **Christ is Risen indeed!**

Hallelujah!

✠ Hymn: "It's a Song of Praise to the Maker" MV 30

**1 It's a song of praise to the Maker,
 the thrush sings high in the tree.**

**It's a song of praise to the Maker,
the gray whale sings in the sea,**

**And by the Spirit you and I
can you join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.**

- 2 It's a call of life to the giver
when waves and waterfalls roar.
It's a call of life to the giver
when high tides break on the shore.
And by the Spirit you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
add sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.**
- 3 It's a hymn of love to the lover;
the bumblebees sing along.
It's a hymn of love to the lover;
the summer breeze joins the song,
And by the Spirit you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.**
- 4 It's the chorus of all creation;
it's sung by all living things.
It's the chorus of all creation;
a song the universe sings,
And by the Spirit you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.**

Gathering Prayer (all):

**Creator,
as we gather, we thank you for Creation:
for light and darkness;
for air, wind, and sky;
for earth and sea;
for seeds, harvests, and plant life;
for sunlight, moonlight, and starlight;
for every living creature, swarming, flying, creeping, and
grazing;
and, for our lives.
May our actions, meditation and prayers honour, celebrate and heal**

your very good Creation. We seek wisdom to share our gratitude and love in good and healing ways. Amen.

—*Based on a prayer written by Alydia Smith. From Alydia Smith, ed., Act/Fast: Spiritual Practices for a Climate in Crisis (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2023), p. 127. Free to use with attribution.*

Children & Youth Time and Psalm 23 (VU 747)

- 1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me,
the quiet waters by.**
- 2 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own name's sake.**
- 3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.**
- 4 My table thou has furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.**
- 5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.**

Children proceed to the Gathering Room.

We Listen for God's Word

From the Gospels: St. Luke 18 1-8 (MSG, alt) *Wanda McNea*

18¹⁻³ Jesus told them a story showing that it was necessary for them to pray consistently and never quit. He said, “There was once a judge in some city who never gave God a thought and cared nothing for people. A widow in that city kept after him: ‘My rights are being violated. Protect me!’

4-5 “He never gave her the time of day. But after this went on and on he said to himself, ‘I care nothing what God thinks, even less what people think. But because this widow

won't quit badgering me, I'd better do something and see that she gets justice—otherwise I'm going to end up beaten black-and-blue by her pounding.”

⁶⁻⁸ Then the Master said, “Do you hear what that judge, corrupt as he is, is saying? So what makes you think God won't step in and work justice for his chosen people, who continue to cry out for help? Won't he stick up for them? I assure you, he will. He will not drag his feet. But how much of that kind of persistent faith will the Son of Man find on the earth when he returns?”

One: For the wisdom that guides us, the word that inspires us
and the truth that enlightens us.

All: We praise you, O God.

Sermon:

“a gospel with no limits”

Rev. McLean

✠ Hymn: “Draw the Circle Wide” MV 145

**Refrain: 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.**

- 1 God the still-point of the circle,
'round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms.**
- 2 Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call.**
- 3 Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door.**

We Respond to God

Community Prayers and the Prayer of Jesus (spoken)

Senior Choir: “Arise, My Love, My Fair One” - *Healey Willan*

“Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away,

¹¹ for now the winter is past,
 the rain is over and gone.
¹² The flowers appear on the earth;
 the time of singing has come,
 and the voice of the turtledove
 is heard in our land.
¹³ The fig tree puts forth its figs,
 and the vines are in blossom;
 they give forth fragrance.
 Arise, my love, my fair one,
 and come away. Song of Solomon 2:10-13

Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Hymn

TUNE: OLD HUNDREDTH VU # 541

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
 In heaven and on earth below;
 One God, Three Persons we adore,
 And sing our praise for evermore.**

Prayer of Dedication (all)

Loving Creator, how splendid are your works, made in wisdom and love. The Earth itself is yours, O God, and everything in it! All Creation seeks to praise your awesome deeds. Bless the gifts we return to you, by envelope, through PAR, and in every other way, as we seek to honour you with gifts of love and to share the good news of your grace with all people. May our care for one another, for all in need, and for the Earth itself, also be a gift we offer in your name. Amen.

God Sends Us to Be the Church in the World

✠ Hymn: "Creating God, Your Fingers Trace" VU 265

- 1 Creating God, your fingers trace
 the bold designs of farthest space;
 let sun and moon and stars and light
 and what lies hidden praise your might.**
- 2 Sustaining God, your hands uphold
 earth's mysteries known or yet untold;
 let waters fragile blend with air,
 enabling life, proclaim your care.**
- 3 Redeeming God, your arms embrace
 all now despised for creed or race;**

**let peace, descending like a dove,
make known on earth your healing love.**

- 4 Indwelling God, your gospel claims
one family with a billion names;
let every life be touched by grace
until we praise you face to face.**

✠The Blessing for Easter Season

✠Sung Blessing: "When You Go From this Place"

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**When you go from this place be true.
May the blessing of life find you.
May the winds of the Spirit guide you,
'cross the ocean of all your days.
May the seeds of your love - your life
a-dorn the Way.
A-dorn the Way.
A-dorn the Way.**

Organ Postlude: Variations on CREATION - Haydn, arr. by Gay