**Trinity United Church**

**April 20, 2025 – Easter Sunday**

**Land Acknowledgement**

*“We acknowledge that for many thousands of years the indigenous people of Turtle Island walked on this land. We are thankful to share in the special spirit of this place, rich in the energy of Mother Earth and the love of all creation.”*

**God Welcomes Each One of You with Loving Grace**

**Scripture Reading**

**John 20:1-18 *(the story of the empty tomb)***

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

In the early morning dawn, as the sun slips over the horizon, the tomb is empty and Christ’s light shines forth in a new way. In the spirit of this light, we light the Christ Candle and give thanks that in Christ, God’s transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us.

Christ is Risen!

**He is risen indeed!!**

**Introit: VU#161 “Welcome Happy Morning” (1st verse only)**

**Announcements and Opportunities @Trinity**

**Gathering Words:**

Christ is alive,

**Alleluia!!**

God’s steadfast love endures forever.

**We gather in the name of the one who gives us life.**

**We pray in the name of the one whose life shows us how to live.**

**We serve in the name of the one who died and rose again.**

Christ is alive, Alleluia!

**God’s steadfast love endures forever.**

**Opening Hymn: VU#333 “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”**

**Opening Prayer:**

**Renewing and life-giving God, we come this morning, to be woken from the complacency of our daily routine to find again the surprise of the resurrection story. May our eyes and ears be open to the amazement of the empty tomb; and the fearful but excited voice of the woman who bears it witness. May our hearts and minds be open to the vision beyond the empty tomb; as we listen to the affirming words of a love that will not be silenced. In the songs of scripture and prayer may we join in the celebration of the risen Christ among us. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! Amen.**

**Hymn: VU#151 “Lift High the Cross”**

**Prayer of Confession**

In the light of God’s resurrection joy, we can see beyond the tombs that might limit us.

**We can see**

**…beyond our apathy to find new action in God’s purpose,**

**...beyond our guilt to find a fresh start in God’s love.**

**We can see**

**…beyond our uncaring to find new compassion in God’s care.**

**…beyond our self-focus to new outreach in God’s generosity.**

In the light of God’s resurrection joy, we can see beyond our fear to the faith that gives us hope.

*… pause for silent contemplation*

**Words of Assurance:**

We rise to new life in Christ.

**As we walk with compassionate confidence.**

**As we speak with compassionate truth.**

**As we work for compassionate inclusiveness.**

We rise to new life in Christ as we follow in the footsteps of his love. Know that in this great love from God, we are forgiven and made whole.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Sharing The Children’s Time**

**Hymn VU#211 “Crown Him with Many Crowns”**

**God Speaks to Us with Peace and Assurance**

**An Easter Song of Affirmation**

We sing of Jesus,

a Jew, born to a woman in poverty

in a time of social upheaval and political oppression.

So filled with the Holy Spirit was he that, in him, people experienced the presence of God among them.

**He healed the sick and fed the hungry,**

**He crossed barriers of race, class, culture, and gender.**

**He preached and practised unconditional love –**

 **love of God, love of neighbour,**

 **love of friend, love of enemy --**

**and he commanded his followers to love one another as he had loved them.**

Because his witness to love was threatening, he was crucified.

But death was not the last word.

God raised Jesus from death.

**And so this morning, we sing of Jesus alive to us in a new way, through the Spirit.**

**We celebrate him as the Word made flesh, the one in whom God and humanity are perfectly joined, the transformation of our lives.**

**We sing of Jesus, Hallelujah!!**

***(adapted from A Song of Faith – the 2006 Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada)***

**Isaiah 65:17-25** *( new heavens and a new earth…)*

**Music: “A FESTIVE ALLELUIA” By Mary Lynn Lightfoot**

**Message: Bearing Witness**

**God Supports and Lifts Us**

**Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer (sung VU#960)**

**Acknowledging our Offerings in Support of Trinity United’s ministries**

*In the spirit of abundance, we present our offering for God’s work in our world.*

**Prayer of Dedication**: **Ever-loving God, in the spirit of deep gratitude we offer our gifts, our lives, our compassion, our service to others, and to creation. Bless all that we offer, so that we might be blessings of hope, peace, and grace. We ask this in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.**

**Hymn VU#509 “Here I am Lord”**

**Celebration of Communion**

*At this table we bear witness to our resurrection faith.*

*Here the common things of life, bread and juice, memories and dreams,*

*become holy, touched by God.*

*All are welcome to this celebration of faith.*

**Call to Give Thanks**

Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed!**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**The Eucharistic Prayer**

Blessed are you, gracious God, Creator of light, Giver of all life, Source of love.

You are creative and self-giving, generously moving in all the near and distant corners of the universe.

**Nothing exists that does not find its source in you.**

**Even when we turn away from you, you keep faith with us, your presence never fails us, your gifts of hope and new life transform us.**

We praise you for Jesus Christ, risen to life, eternal as your love.

With the woman at the tomb, we raise the strain of gladness.

**Hallelujah! Life is stronger than death!**

**The day of resurrection has come, scattering fear and gloom.**

**And so we rejoice with all your people of every time and place, and with angels and archangels, to proclaim the glory of your name:**

In Jesus, God incarnate, the Risen Christ, we are joined together as a community of believers:

 Loving what he loved,

 Living what he taught, and,

 Striving to be his faithful servants in our time and place.

**With thanksgiving we gather at this table and ask for the grace of your blessing that, as we faithfully remember the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus, our hearts will find new focus in your truth in our lives.**

**Amen.**

**Words of Institution**

On the night before he died, Jesus gathered with his closest friends in an Upper Room and while at table he took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said,

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

Whenever you do this, remember me.”

Likewise after supper, Jesus took the cup, and poured, saying,

“This is the new covenant in my blood.

Each time you do this, remember me.”

We do remember.

We remember his life of love, his friendship, his teaching, his dying, and his rising to life again.

In sharing this meal, we live out the mystery of our faith:

**Let us Pray**

Loving God, we rejoice in the gift of your grace. Grant that in praise and thanksgiving we may so offer ourselves to you that our lives may proclaim the mystery of faith. Send, O God, your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, that all who share in this loaf and cup may be the body of Christ: light, life, and love in the world. In this hope, and as your Easter people, we praise you. Amen.

**Breaking the Bread and Raising the Cup**

The body of Christ,

Jesus Christ, the bread of life.

The blood of Christ,

Jesus Christ, the True Vine.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God,

And all are welcome at this table, just the way you are.

*Please come forward to receive communion as instructed.*

**Prayer after Communion**

**Dear Lord, we give thanks that in this simple meal of bread and juice, the grace of your love can transform our hearts. Sanctify the commitments we have made. Bless us on our way, as your resurrection people, to give witness to your love and hope. We pray in the name and spirit of Jesus. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn VU#155 “Jesus Christ is Risen Today”**

**Commissioning & Benediction**

May we go from this time of worship to live with the vison and hope of Christ’s resurrection love in all we say and do.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The Love of God

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of you this day and forever more,

Blessings in your week,

Amen.

**Choral Blessing: VU#967 “Threefold Amen”**

**Music to Inspire our Serving**

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**Blessing for the Week**

May the,

“The light of God surround you,

the love of God enfold you,

the power of God protect you,

and the presence of God watch over you."

This day and forever more.

Amen.

*(an old Irish Blessing)*