

**“Nourishing an Inspiring Home  
for  
Spiritual Growth  
in  
Christ’s Love.”**

*Through: Worship, Music, Care, Fellowship, Prayer, Study, Service & Outreach*

*Tsawwassen United Church is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Indigenous Peoples and the treaty territory of the Tsawwassen First Nation. The United Church of Canada acknowledges the territory’s significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived, and continue to live, in this territory.*

**May 15, 2022: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

*Portions of the service printed in **bold** are spoken by the whole congregation.  
Those who are able are invited to stand for the Hymns*

PRELUDE: Trois Gymnopédies No. 1 (excerpt) Eric Satie

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

**Canticle of Invitation: “This is the Day That God Has Made” VU 175**

**This is the day that God has made! Rejoice! Rejoice, and be exceeding glad!**

**This is the day that God has made! Rejoice! Rejoice! Hallelujah!**

**1 Christ has conquered death at last, left the tomb that held him fast!  
Gone the sorrow, gone the night, dawns the morning clear and bright! R**

**2 Jesus lives who once was dead, lives forever, as he said!  
Risen now our Saviour, King; songs of gladness let us sing! R**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Praise the Lord!

**Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights!**

Praise God, all you angels; praise God, all creatures high and low!

**Rulers of the earth and all peoples, praise God’s holy name!**

Young men and women alike, old and young together!

**With voices united, let us praise the Lord!**

**HYMN OF PRAISE: “Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven” VU 240**

**1 Praise, my soul, the God of heaven, glad of heart your carols raise;  
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who, like me, should sing God's  
praise. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the Maker all your days!**

**2 Praise God for the grace and favour shown our forebears in distress;  
God is still the same forever, slow to chide and swift to bless.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Sing our Maker's faithfulness!**

**3 Like a loving parent caring, God knows well our feeble frame;  
gladly all our burdens bearing, still to countless years the same.**

**Hallelujah! Hallelujah! All within me, praise God's name!**

**4 Frail as summer's flower we flourish; blows the wind and it is gone;  
but, while mortals rise and perish, God endures unchanging on.**

**Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the high eternal one.**

**5 Angels, teach us adoration, you behold God face to face;  
sun and moon and all creation, dwellers all in time and space.**

**Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise with us the God of grace!**

**PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION:**

Holy God, the first and the last, beginning and end of all things, you are worthy of praise from all your creation.

Sun, moon, and stars praise you. Earth, sea, and sky praise you.

Every living thing praises you in its own way.

And so we praise you in our human diversity, joining our varied voices with all your creatures in heaven and on earth.

You fill our lives with the wonder of your love in Christ Jesus.

Your Spirit moves throughout the world to reveal your purposes for every living thing.

Receive our prayers and praise this day, for you are the Source of our life and our hope, Holy God, ever Three and Ever One.

**Loving God, Jesus commanded us to love one another so the world would know we follow him.**

**Yet we confess we do not always love one another, not the way Jesus loves us.**

**The world has seen our squabbling, our history of hypocrisy, and our lack of compassion for those who don’t measure up.**

**Loving God, forgive us. Lord Jesus, continue to love us. Holy Spirit, fill us with love, so that the world will witness your love in our words and actions. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

Jesus taught us that no one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. Christ has laid down his life for us and invites us to love one another as he has loved us.

Let us rejoice in his forgiving love and share it with each other day by day.

**HYMN OF INVITATION: “All Creatures of Our God and King” VU 217**

**1 All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing:  
hallelujah, hallelujah!**

**Bright burning sun with golden beam, soft shining moon with silver gleam,  
sing praises, sing praises, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!**

- 2 O rushing winds and breezes soft, O clouds that ride the winds aloft,  
sing praises, hallelujah!  
O rising morn, in praise rejoice; O lights of evening, find a voice:  
sing praises, sing praises, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!**
- 3 Earth, ever fertile, day by day brings forth rich blessings on our way:  
sing praises, hallelujah!  
The flowers and fruits that verdant grow, let them God's glory also show:  
sing praises, hallelujah! hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!**
- 4 And everyone of tender heart, forgiving others, take your part:  
sing praises, hallelujah!  
All who long pain and sorrow bear, praise God and yield up all your care:  
sing praises, hallelujah! hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!**
- 5 Let all things their Creator bless, and worship God in humbleness:  
sing praises, hallelujah!  
Praise God eternal, praise the Son, and praise the Spirit, three in one:  
sing praises, hallelujah! hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!**

#### **CELEBRATING THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF GENEROSITY**

The season of Easter is unfolding while the gifts of spring also remind us of God's generosity in Christ and in creation. May the gifts we offer our gratitude for God's goodness to us, and the hope for new life we have in Christ Jesus.

#### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION:**

Generous God, we bless you for your gift of life renewed through Christ's love, and through springtime growth in fields and gardens. Bless the gifts we bring and make them signs of hope and renewal in the world we serve in the name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

#### **SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 11: 1 – 18**

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3 and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

4 Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

8 "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

11 "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with[a] water, but you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit.' 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

This is the witness of God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

#### **GOSPEL HYMN: "O Love that will not let Me go" VU 658**

- 1 O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow  
may richer, fuller be.**
- 2 O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
my heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
may brighter, fairer be.**
- 3 O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain  
that morn shall tearless be.**
- 4 O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red  
life that shall endless be.**

REFLECTION: "...who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

#### **MUSICAL OFFERING: "Lord, I Stretch My Hands to You" J. Althouse**

#### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Lord our God, you have given us so many wonders in this world you created. We thank you for spring sunshine and refreshing rain;

for colours exploding in blossoms opening, grass greening, and gardens sprouting.

Thank you for all the signs of new life around us this Easter season. Make the earth fruitful in this growing season, so that food will be plentiful for the hungry.

God of new life,

We pray that we might learn to care for our planet as your gift before it's too late.

We pray for scientists and all those who work tirelessly to teach us how to look after the environment.

Renew their energy for the responsibilities they carry.

We pray for leaders in government, business and communities, that they will make care for the earth a priority for the sake of generations yet to come.

Inspire each of us to do all we can, no matter how small or insignificant our efforts may seem, to walk more respectfully on the face of your creation.

God of the small and insignificant as well as powerful and influential, we thank you for our families and friends who offer us love and encouragement as we move through life.

We pray for those families and communities whose lives have been disrupted by war and conflict, who worry about safety each day and what the future will hold for them.

*(Keep a brief silence, adding more specific prayers as you feel led)*

Guide all those with decision making power to consider the lives of the vulnerable as very precious, and make policies that protect the future for them.

God of the vulnerable, we pray for all those whose future is uncertain: for those are facing illness or waiting for treatment, for those mourning the loss of someone dear, and those who feel lonely or discouraged.

*(Keep a brief silence.)*

We pray for those who are homeless or unemployed, for all who know hunger or despair, and for those facing danger or discrimination every day.

*(Keep a brief silence.)*

Empower us with your Spirit to reach out to those in need, in this community and in places distant from us, so that we can make your love tangible in their lives in Jesus' name.

God of our Lord Jesus Christ,

We thank you for this community that gathers in Jesus' name, for the warmth and welcome offered here, for friendship and faithfulness discovered, for learning and leadership shared with each other.

Thank you for the hope that rises in us through the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Make us expressions of that hope to each other and to the world you love for his sake, as we join our voices with his followers around the world, praying the words he taught us:

#### **The Lords Prayer (Spoken)**

**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 and the Power and the Glory, forever and ever. AMEN!**

#### **HYMN OF IMPLEMENTATION: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" VU 333**

**1 Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.**

**2 Come, almighty to deliver; let us all thy grace receive;  
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.**

**3 Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee,  
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

#### **BENEDICTION:**

Draw us forth, God of all creation. Draw us forward and away from limited certainty into the immense world of your love. Give us the capacity to even for a moment taste the richness of the feast you give us. Give us the peace to live with uncertainty, with questions, with doubts. Help us to experience the resurrection anew with open wonder and an increasing ability to see you in the people of Easter. Amen.

POSTLUDE: 'Piece Together' by R. Smail