

# **EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH**

**Fifth Sunday in Lent**

**March 17, 2024**

## **We Gather**

### **Prelude**

### **Choir Introit**

This Is the Day

by M. Blankenship

### **Opening Hymn**

In the Bulb There Is a Flower

VU: 703

### **Territorial Acknowledgment**

Grace Boogers

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have journeyed on this land. A relationship with the land is at the center of Indigenous peoples' lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and Mississaugas of the Credit, and we acknowledge these peoples' stewardship of the land throughout the ages.

Acknowledging the territory where we gather and the peoples who have traditionally called it home over thousands of years helps us to live out the United Church's Apologies to the First Peoples of North America. But words are easy---actions are more difficult. We are called to live the apology we speak. The acknowledgment supports our calls to ourselves and others to pay respect to Indigenous Peoples. It is one way that we, and the church, can work toward right relations, and move toward becoming the community that God calls us to be together.

**Today we focus upon Call to Action #68 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report of 2015.**

### **Announcements**

Reverend Jan

Words of Welcome

Reverend Jan

Theme Introduction

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Reverend Jan

Call to Worship

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,  
when I will make a new covenant.

**The new covenant of God is written on our hearts.**

Behold, the days are coming says the Lord,  
when I shall be your God and you shall be my people.

**The new covenant of God is written on our hearts.**

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,  
when all people shall know me, from the least to the  
greatest.

**The new covenant of God is written on our hearts.**

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,  
when I will remember your sin no more.

**The new covenant of God is written on our hearts.**

**Let us worship God together!**

Opening Prayer:

**We are very near now to the time of letting go,  
when the grain of wheat falls into the ground.**

**We fear the falling,  
the losing,**

**we don't want to think about it.**

**And yet, in the soil there is a mystery:  
life lost and kept for eternity.**

**We are very near now to the time of letting go.**

**Glorious God, write your name on our hearts.**

**Inspire us with your laws of love,  
that we might proclaim this truth:**

**You are our God, and we are your people.**

**Amen**

## A Time For All Ages

## Prayer for Illumination

God's covenant of love is written on our hearts—a covenant proclaimed by the prophets, embodied in Christ, and revealed in scripture.

Let us pray:

Open our ears to hear and our hearts to receive as we listen to the Word. May the covenant of hope be revealed anew this day. May we hear the thunderous voice of God and may this voice reassure us with hope.

Amen

## Hebrew Testament Readings

### Jeremiah 31: 31-34

**New Revised Standard Version**

<sup>31</sup> The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband,<sup>[a]</sup> says the Lord. <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

**New Testament Reading**

**New Revised Standard Version**

**John 12: 20-33**

<sup>20</sup> Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup> They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup> Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup> Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup> "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup> The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people [to](#) myself." <sup>33</sup> He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

**God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.  
Herein is Wisdom. Thanks be to God. Amen**

**Anthem**

Family of Faith

by G. Peterson

**Message**

The Covenant of Hope

Reverend Jan

**Hymn**

I Feel the Winds of God

VU: 625

## **We Respond**

**Minute for Mission**

Bill Berry

**Invitation to the Offering**

Reverend Jan

**Doxology**

What Can I Do?

MV: 191

**Offering Prayer**

**Generous and loving God,  
grant us the wisdom to know you more completely.  
Give us the hope to live as your people.  
Inspire us to give of our spirits more fully,  
in the faith that your promise is already within us.  
As we give these gifts today,  
we recommit ourselves to your service  
and to the service of your people.  
Engrave these gifts with hope, O God,  
and use them to reveal your presence in the world.  
Amen**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Lord's Prayer**

The language which Jesus spoke was Aramaic. Aramaic originated among the Arameans in the ancient region of Syria. Earliest records of its use date to 900 BC. It gradually replaced Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people in those areas. After going through several stages of development, Aramaic led to modern Arabic and Sanskrit. This version of the Lord's Prayer is a translation by Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz.

***O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,  
you create all that moves in light.  
Focus your light within us--make it useful:***

**as the rays of a beacon show the way.  
Create your reign of unity now—  
through our fiery hearts and willing hands.  
Your one desire then acts with ours,  
as in all light, so in all forms.  
Grant what we need each day in bread and insight:  
subsistence for the call of growing life.  
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,  
as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.  
Don't let us enter forgetfulness  
But free us from unripeness  
From you is born all ruling will,  
the power and the life to do,  
the song that beautifies all,  
from age to age it renews.  
Truly--power to these statements—  
may they be the source from which all my actions grow.  
Sealed in trust & faith.  
Amen.**

*Transliteration and original translation of The Aramaic Lord's Prayer by Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz from the Peshitta (Syriac-Aramaic) version of Matthew 6:9-13 & Luke 11:2-4 reprinted from Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus (Harper Collins, 1990), © 1990, used with permission.*

For other translations and information on the Aramaic Lord's Prayer, please visit [www.thenazareneway.com](http://www.thenazareneway.com).

## **We Leave To Serve**

**Closing Hymn**

May the God of Hope

VU: 424

**Commissioning**

**Extinguishing the Christ Candle**

## Benediction

## Three-fold Amen

## Postlude

## Worship Resources:

*Gathering Magazine* Lent/Easter 2024 Year B (page 15, 31-36); *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2024* (pages 68-71); *Feasting on the Word: Year B, Volume 2* (pages 122-145); *Texts For Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary: Year B* (pages 230-239). Used with permission.

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## Truth and Reconciliation Report 2015 Call to Action # 68

This week we consider the second of four Calls to Action which pertains to **Museums and Archives**.

***We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, and the Canadian Museums Association to mark the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017 by establishing a dedicated national funding program for commemoration projects on the theme of reconciliation.***

According to the website Indigenous Watchdog, this Call to Action is considered to be "Complete."

The website states:

"The government did not establish dedicated funding for Indigenous groups but allocated a percentage of over-all spending to indigenous projects that consisted of:

- **Signature Projects:** \$3,603,300 for 5 projects out of 38 (13% of total) including 2 dedicated to Reconciliation
- **Community Projects:** \$28.6M for 248 projects out of 636 (39% of total)

As noted on the government website: "The Canada 150 fund of \$200M is now closed." (July 15, 2018)"

<https://www.indigenouswatchdog.org/cta/call-to-action-68/>

The website TRCTalk is very out of date. The posting was written prior to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation in 2017.

<http://courseware.acadiau.ca/trctalk/call-to-action-68/>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Vision for Becoming Affirming

As a community of faith on a path to becoming an Affirming Ministry, we seek to better understand and celebrate the diversity of God's creation. We celebrate the richness of our community when we have diversity in age, ability, gender identity, racial/cultural backgrounds, economics, class, sexual orientation, and family configurations. We seek to create a brave space with an open invitation to bring every aspect of your whole self into your participation within the East Plains United Church faith community.

**Wider Work Committee**—Meeting on Wed, Mar 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm on Zoom.

**Wider Work Committee**—Indoor Garage, Book and Bake  
**Sale on Sat. April 6, 2024.**

Volunteers are needed for Fri's set-up and for the Sale, with a **sign-up sheet** at the back 😊

Throughout March, we will be collecting food and donations for the **Compassion Society and Agapé**,



respectively. Cheques should be made payable to East Plains United Church, with Memo for Agapé please.

**Coffee & Conversation**—Tuesdays 10:00 in Campbell Room

**Lunch & Lectionary**—Thursdays from 12:30-2:00 on Zoom

**VISTA CARDS**—Orders are due Sun, Mar 24<sup>th</sup>. Please call Gayle Burnison 905-632-3525 or email: [kgburnison@cogeco.ca](mailto:kgburnison@cogeco.ca) for enquiries.

**Out-4-Lunch Aldershot**—Returning to St. Matthew's on the Plains Anglican Church and served at 12 Noon: **Mondays, Apr 8, May 6, June 3**. Especially for seniors, but open to everyone! Entry off REAR parking lot.

### Jan's Journal



Happy Saint Patrick's Day to everyone of Irish descent!

March has been a busy month so far! This week, we have a chance to catch our breath before we begin Holy Week on Palm Sunday.

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, we spoke about Remit 1. This is a Remit regarding the creation of an autonomous Indigenous church within the United Church of Canada. The members of the Official Board will vote on this Remit during the Board meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>. In order to prepare for the vote, I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourselves with:

- The Doctrine of Discovery
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- The background to this Remit

It all began with the Doctrine of Discovery. There is an excellent video on YouTube titled: *Doctrine of Discovery*:

*Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts*, created by the Anglican Church of Canada. Just open YouTube on your computer or device and type the title in the search bar. It will appear. It is an hour long.

For background information on the Remit: open the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council website. You will see a black box on the right-hand side which contains the word "Remit." When you click on that you will find yourself looking at a page of numerous available documents and three videos. The third video is titled "Remit Foundations Video." This video, in my opinion, provides the best overview of the background and the issues of the Remit. It is 31 minutes long.

If you have questions, I am happy to speak with you about them.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, a Congregational Meeting took place following worship. Thank you to everyone who stayed for the meeting. Thank you to Morgan Perigo, Karen Maerz, Mary Willard, and Frank Barretto, who made up the committee tasked with updating East Plains' Governance model. They worked for a couple of years to research and revise and bring EPUC's Governance Model into a format that will fit the needs of the church today.

The next step is to implement this model and work through the growing pains and the adjustment period as we bring it into practice. This will require both flexibility and patience!

Easter is rapidly approaching!! As we did last year, we will darken the sanctuary for our entry into worship on Easter Sunday morning. If you have a black sheet or tablecloth that you would be willing to lend to me for 24 hours,

please let me know. Your assistance is very much appreciated!!

The Easter services are:

- March 24, 2024: Palm Sunday (this service includes Communion)
- March 29<sup>th</sup>: Service for Good Friday is a joint service with West Plains United Church, at West Plains. The service time is 10:30 a.m.
- March 31<sup>st</sup>: Easter Sunday service

You can reach me at: [revjanmcc@gmail.com](mailto:revjanmcc@gmail.com) or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings,

Pastor Jan