

# *Sunnybrook United Church*

## **Our Vision:**

### **Being - Belonging - Becoming**

Living our lives with compassion, commitment, purpose, and meaning. Creating a warm and welcoming intergenerational community of faith, while challenging one another to learn and grow

## **Our Mission:**

We are a community seeking to follow Jesus the Christ. We gather in large and small groups to worship, celebrate, encourage and comfort one another. Living our faith, we walk humbly with God, caring for all with love and compassion, and pursuing justice.



*Figure 1- Thriving in Anxious Times (picture in public domain)*

## **ORDER for PHYSICALLY DISTANT WORSHIP**

**April 26, 2020 – Third Sunday of Easter**

### ***Opening our Arms***

**GATHERING MUSIC** – Allison Clark

**CENTERING AND CANDLELIGHTING**

**🎵 GATHERING SONG:** “Where Two or Three Are Gathered” **MV 14**

**OPENING PRAYER & PRAYER OF JESUS**

As you came to the first disciples after the first Easter, Lord Jesus,  
come to us.  
Come to us in our doubt,  
Come to us in our confusion,  
Come to us in our fear,  
Let us catch a glimpse of your new creation,  
as did those first disciples on the road to Emmaus,  
For we know that a glimpse is enough,  
To sustain our faith,  
to relieve our confusion,  
to calm our fear,  
and to send us forth in confidence  
to challenge the ways of death with the promise of your new life.  
For we pray in the name of the first born from the dead,  
who taught us to pray, saying...

### Opening our Minds

♪ **SONG:** "This is the Day That God Has Made"

VU 175

#### **SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

*"If you look at a window, you see flyspecks, dust, the crack where Junior's Frisbee hit it. If you look through a window, you see the world beyond. Something like this is the difference between those who see the Bible as a holy bore and those who see it as the Word of God, which speaks out of the depths of an almost unimaginable past into the depths of ourselves."* – Frederick Buechner, *Beyond Words*, 46-47

**Luke 24:13-35** – Two disciples walking to Emmaus discover Jesus has been walking with them, but they hadn't recognized him until they invite him to stay and share a meal.

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he

interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

♪ **SONG:** "Stay With Us through the Night"

**VU 182**

**MINISTER'S MESSAGE:** "Recognizing the Risen Christ"

In his message, our minister offers an informed but personal interpretation of a passage from the Bible. This interpretation is intended to assist, not replace, our own creative engagement with the Bible as a means through which God may be communicating with us.

During this season of Easter, we tell ancient stories. But the stories are not just about something that happened once, nearly two thousand years ago. If that is the case, then we above all people are to be most pitied, for our hope is in vain, and our faith is in vain. Because Easter is really about the presence of the risen Christ in our midst, here, now, today, in you and in me, and in the flawed and gifted people we meet every day.

That is why the stories of Easter are stories, a variety of stories of brief encounters people had with the risen Christ. Mary outside the tomb, disciples in a locked room, a mysterious stranger grilling fish on the lakeshore, Paul on the road to Damascus, two disciples on the road to Emmaus. By telling those ancient stories, we also invoke the stories of our lives and our encounters with the holy.

It is later on Easter day. Out on the hill of the skull, everything has been tidied up and put away. Life is going back to normal for the powerful; Pilate is content the Galilean trouble spot was eradicated so easily, and Caiaphas is relieved that the threat of Roman military pacification has been put off for a bit longer. But for those for whom Jesus was more than an annoyance, the world has ended.

They were going home with heavy hearts, walking the dusty road with leaden feet. It was one of those times we all have when every dream we have ever worked for, every hope we have ever been stirred, every ideal which we've nourished, comes crashing down, when blessed illusion clashes with cold, hard reality and reality emerges triumphant. "We had thought he was the one to redeem Israel" the two disciples said to a stranger on the road. They had staked their futures on him, and now he was gone, snuffed out like a bug under a running shoe. The vision of a kin(g)dom, glimpsed through the parables and miracles of this strange but brilliant teacher, seemed utterly smashed. Now there seemed little left for them to do but go home, back to the safe, familiar comfortable village from which Jesus had called them forth.

In the same way many of us are moving with heavy hearts these days, to the extent we are moving at all. Perhaps you feel defeated by the restrictions, or the economic dislocation, or the fear of what the future may hold. And many of us are living with heavy hearts this week, as we mourn with the people of Colchester County in Nova Scotia, after a man with a police car, a uniform and murderous intent, left a swath of death, fire and destruction through a series of rural communities. Perhaps, like the first disciples, the temptation is to retreat to our own Emmaus, look for a way of returning to an existence that is little more than existence, little more than survival.

Many of the resurrection appearances seem to have intercepted the disciples as they were on the road back to remembered simplicity. That is true in this story as well. In a form that was not at first obvious Jesus came to this couple, and challenged both their despair and their illusions, helping them to weave this experience into the traditions of faith and history on which they had been nurtured.

They do not recognize him until he breaks the bread. The story has long been recognized as a reference to the fact that we meet Jesus in a very special way when we break bread together in the communion meal. But it is more than that, for it speaks of how we encounter glimpses of the eternal in everyday life, indeed in the most common things of our existence. Lucy Maud Montgomery put it well when she wrote, "There is a book of revelations in everyone's life." (*Anne of Green Gables*). In the Lord's Supper, we recognize that God has the ability to take ordinary bread and wine and make them extraordinary. And so it is that we can live with the constant expectation that in every ordinary moment in life we can meet Jesus Christ. "It is not only at the communion table we can be with Christ; we can be with him at the dinner table too" according to William Barclay. "He is not only the host in his Church; he is the guest in every home."

But just as the disciples recognized him in the breaking of bread, he disappears, not to be grasped or domesticated, leaving them with a glimpse of a possibility, a vision which can nourish their ideals in the midst of the cold, hard reality of life.

It was only in a glimpse that they realized who they had been speaking with, and only in hindsight, that they realized that he had been present with them. And that is the way it usually is for us too. The holy moments, the moments of revelation and intimacy with God, are only recognized as such when they are past. The holy cannot be controlled or possessed. It was that way for Mary when she met Jesus outside the tomb. When she recognized him, she tried to embrace him, but he said "Don't touch me. Don't hold on to me." She had to realize, as Frederick Buechner says, that "the life in him was no longer a life she could know by touching it, ... but a life she could know only by living it... [No longer was it] her here and him there, but her here... and him here too, alive inside her life..." ("Mary Magdalene," from *Beyond Words*, by Frederick Buechner, p. 247, emphasis added)

The glimpse of the holy is no more than a glimpse, but the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus reminds us that if the vision is powerful enough, and we embrace it fully, live it completely, the holy begins to live inside us.

But we need not go very far to find examples of how the risen Christ lives in us. We can look at the efforts we are making to support each other during this time of physical distancing: through these services, through the phone tree and buddy system that are keeping people in touch by telephone, through the Sunnybrook Gifts that are emailed out 2-3 times a week, and through the efforts that each of us are making to support and encourage our friends and family members. We can look at the flawed saints, including ourselves, whom we encounter each day, in person, by phone, by Messenger or Zoom.

Let us join together in a prayer which comes to us from Seoul, Korea:

Stay with us, blessed stranger, for the day is far spent,  
and we have not yet recognized your face in each of our sisters and brothers.  
Stay with us, blessed stranger, for the day is far spent,  
and we have not yet shared your bread in grace with our brothers and sisters.  
Stay with us, blessed stranger, for the day is far spent,  
and we have not listened to your Word in the words of our sisters and brothers.  
Stay with us, blessed stranger, because our very night becomes day  
when you are there.

*Seoul 18M002*

🎵 **SOLO:** “You Raise Me Up” – Brent LaBrosse

Written by Brendan Graham / Rolf Lovland. "Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with account # A-715266."

## *Opening our Hearts*

### **CELEBRATING MARCH AND APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

#### **INVITATION TO SHARE**

#### **OFFERING**

*I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver... The giver is as enriched as the recipient, and more important, that intangible but very real psychic force of good in the world is increased... If we change the way we think of charity, our personal lives will be richer and the larger world will be improved. When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed. – Maya Angelou*



#### **CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS**

Jean McKee, an active and valued member of this congregation died on April 13. Mary Patricia Eastland was born in Saskatoon, but in the first grade decided she wanted to be called Jean, and so it was thereafter. Jean married Tom McKee and they raised their five children in Tisdale SK where Tom owned a trucking/moving company and Jean ran the curling rink concession with her sister. She also sold Nutrimetics cosmetics. In 1981, they “retired” and moved to Red Deer. Jean managed the “Tinkers” store in Parkland Mall for the next 15 years. Jean was very energetic and always busy. When not working, Jean could be found enjoying golf, bridge, curling, bowling, taking

walks and many many social activities. She also was very active in the church and the UCW. Jean is survived by three of her daughters, 11 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Our condolences to all who loved her. A memorial service will be planned at a later time. Jean was a gift of God who is loved and missed. Jean McKee - Present!

A long-term friend of Sunnybrook United Church, Roy Styner died on Tuesday morning.



Roy was born at Rabbit Lake, Sk. and lived at Robinhood until 1946 when the family moved to the Innisfree area of northeastern Alberta. He had twelve brothers and sisters! Later Roy moved to Edmonton where he met the love of his life Nora, and in 1958 they were married and started a family that grew to include three boys: Leland, Marlin and Parker. They relocated to Red Deer in 1970 where Roy lived until his death.

Throughout his life, Roy had many different jobs from being a heavy equipment operator to driving a Taxi, Gravel Truck then to Long Distance Hauling from Edmonton to California. He designed and built Motor Homes, was a Realtor, and finished his career as a successful car salesman in Red Deer. Roy was a dedicated family man, loved animals, enjoyed family camping, liked traveling, he

was active in the community, an avid skier, golfer, and curler. Roy was a member of the Sunnybrook United Church and sang in the choir.

He had a great sense of humor and loved nothing more than being with family and laughing to the point of tears. He was always ready to lend a hand with any project or repair, and at times would take the lead hand when welcomed and make sure it was done properly. His son Marlin died in 2014. Leland lives in Cochrane and Parker in Chilliwack, B.C. He had two grandchildren. Roy will be deeply missed by his family and friends and will forever be in our hearts.

Our condolences to Nora and all who loved him. A memorial service will be planned at a later time. Roy was a gift of God who is loved and missed. Roy Styner - Present!

- ❖ Allan & Pat Charles wanted us to remember their friend Wilbert (Bert) Adrian from Trochu who died after a long illness. Bert sang for many years with Potter's Clay Quartet in Central Alberta. Our condolences to his wife Marina and all who loved him. Bert was a gift of God who is loved and missed. Bert Adrian - Present!
- ❖ Hazel Chantler is in hospital in Calgary, facing surgery for a bad infection in her foot – she wanted us to pray for her
- ❖ Request prayer for families under stress, especially those in which verbal or physical violence, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, sexual abuse are realities. <https://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-prevention.aspx>

- ❖ Muslims have begun celebrating the holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting and feasting, of hospitality and spiritual solidarity with the hungry. So Ramadan mubarek (blessed Ramadan) to all our Muslim friends.
- ❖ A celebration: Spring is here!
- ❖ the annual yard clean up will be adapted for physical distancing. Up to 15 volunteers can be accommodated on May 9 starting at 9am.

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*According to Jesus, by far the most important thing about praying is to keep at it, not because you have to beat a path to God's door before God will open it, but because until you beat the path, there may be no way of getting to your door. 'Ravish my heart,' John Donne wrote. But God will not usually ravish. He will only court. – Frederick Buechner*

O God, you are the God who walks the road of our lives with us. You are the God who inhabits common things, transforming them into glimpses of the eternal. You are the God who comes to us in the midst of difficult days and delights us with the mystery of things. Help us to recognize you when you come to us.

O God, your presence breaks our despair and sends us back into our world with new hope and new power. Free us from lethargy and boredom, heal our preoccupation with how others live and teach us to recognize you in our own lives, help us, even in the midst of trouble and grief to know your life-transforming presence. Help us and help all those who walk with faces downcast and troubled.

Bless and encourage especially those touched by the tragic murders in Colchester County, Nova Scotia this week. Receive those killed into your loving embrace and grant them, all and each, rest and peace. And for those left behind, families, friends, neighbours, first responders, community members and community leaders, give courage, patience and wisdom. Thank you for all the ways in which Canadians have rallied to reject violence and support that community. And where a sense of security has been shattered, grant peace; where trust in neighbours has been shaken, teach it anew; where optimism has gone up in smoke, replace it with a strong hope. And while things will not go back to the way they were, grant that, with time and patience and love, a new and deeper faith and stronger sense of community will emerge.

O God of Easter, bless all those who grieve, lift up those who are discouraged, renew the hope of the hopeless, and touch us all with your healing love, for we pray in the name of the risen Christ, whom we meet in the least of these your servants. Amen.

🎵 **CLOSING SONG:** “Take Up His Song”

**MV 213**

**CHANGING THE LIGHT** – As we bring this service to a close, we change the light. The light is not gone, any more than our lives end finally when we die. The light changes, just as we change.

**MUSICAL POSTLUDE**

