**Canadian Shield Regional Council**

**Worship Service**

**May 5, 2024**

**Regional Council Meeting Theme: Upon This Rock**

**THE COMMUNITY IS GATHERED**

**Welcome**

**Territorial Acknowledgement**

**Recognition of National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited People**

*We light this candle in recognition of the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited People. We pray for all those who have been touched by this tragedy. May God bring them healing, comfort and peace. May we let God’s light and love guide as we seek to build a world that is safe for all people.*

**Welcoming the Light of Christ**

*As we illumine this candle, may we be reminded of God's light shining in the darkness. And may the light of hope, peace, and justice shine through us.*

**Opening Hymn # 716 VU “My Life Flows On”**

**Call to Worship**

Here we come together, as a people, searching for healing and hope:

**Here we are met by the One who would bless us with abundant life.**

Here we are called to gather as the family of God:

**Here, we find those who are strangers, yet are beloved Children of God, brothers and sisters of ours.**

Here we discover the truth that God makes no distinctions among us:

**Here we are all welcomed and embraced by the One whose arms enfold us in love.**

**GATHERING PRAYER**

When we are alone, you remind us that our brothers and sisters are everywhere. When we are lonely, you whisper to us, inviting us into your heart.

**Great is your love for us, Welcoming God.**

When we wander lost and afraid, you are our Rock of Refuge. When we hunger for hope, you feed us with the fullness of your joy.

**Great is your grace for us, Accepting Christ.**

When those around us make clear they want nothing to do with us, you are our friend. When despair overwhelms us, you invite us to abundant life with you.

**Great is your hope for us, Embracing Spirit.**

God in Community, you welcome us into your heart, as we pray.

**THE COMMUNITY GATHERS AROUND THE WORD**

**Prayer for Illumination**

Loving God, come by your Holy Spirit and dance among us enlivening these sacred words. Help us to hear them anew and may they bring transformation to our lives as disciples of Jesus, the Risen One. Amen.

**Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures – Exodus 17.1-7**

In these sacred words of old, let us hear your Spirit anew.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Responsive Reading – Psalm 71 # 789 VU**

**Reading from the Early Church – Matthew 16.13-18**

In these sacred words of old, let us hear your Spirit anew.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Message – “I Honour Your Journey”**

**Hymn # 509 VU “I, the Lord of Sea and Sky”**

**THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD**

**Invitation to the Offering**

*Thank you for your continued gifts and support of this community of faith and to the United Church of Canada. We sometimes do not know what the road ahead has in store for us, but we trust that God goes with us and that God's work will continue that the work of resurrection will continue. Let us take a moment now to offer ourselves and what we can financially to God's resurrection work in this community and in our world.*

**Offertory - # 191 MV “What Can I Do”**

**Offertory Prayer (Unison)**

**Gracious and loving God, all that we are, and all that we have come from you.  We are so blessed and we praise you for your goodness and generosity.  Out of gratitude and joy, we offer our gifts of money, time, and ourselves for causes greater than ourselves. Bless our offerings that they may be used to give hope to the downtrodden, compassion to the weary, justice to the oppressed, and peace to those who live in conflict in our communities and around the world.  Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

God,

You are a God of compassion and love.

Time after time we have experienced your care and provision.

Time after time You’ve answered our prayers and met our needs—

often in ways we could never have dreamed possible.

We praise You for Your faithful love toward us.

Because we have known Your love,

we come to You with confidence,

offering our prayers for the world that You love.

We see so much pain and suffering;

so much anger and frustration and despair.

It’s easy to feel overwhelmed by the needs around us.

But we continue to bring our prayers to You in faith,

because we know that nothing is impossible for You.

You are the God who rained down bread from heaven,

and made water flow from a rock in the desert;

the God who resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead,

and who brings new life and hope to all who believe.

For You, all things are possible.

Hear our prayers.

We pray for those suffering the effects of recent natural disasters....

We pray for the regions of our world caught up in violence and threats of violence...

We pray for those who live with serious illness,

   those with chronic pain,

   those without access to proper medical care,

   those who are lonely, depressed or grieving, and for those suffering from addiction...

We pray for those whose full humanity is not recognized or celebrated

because of racism, sexism, homo and transphobia, ableism, and all the other "isms" that divide us one from another ...

We pray for our United Church of Canada, and for the Body of Christ worldwide; that we may be courageous, compassionate and faithful followers of Christ.

We pray also for our ordinands: that this new phase of their ministry may be a blessing for them and for those they serve.

Merciful God,

You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to show us a different way to live—

the way of deep humility and obedience.

You’ve called us to love one another,

and to work together with one heart and mind,

balancing our needs with the needs of those around us.

Give us courage to follow faithfully, and with integrity—

with actions that bear witness to the words we speak,

and worship that overflows into our daily tasks and relationships—

so that our lives will bring glory and honour to You,

our Redeemer and Lord. Amen.

**Sung Lord’s Prayer # 960 VU**

**THE COMMUNITY IS SCATTERED**

**Benediction**

*Let us rise from this time together in community and courageously embrace the adventure God has created for us just outside the doors of this Holy Space. Let us go with arms wide open full of radical hospitality ready to embrace the pain of the world with God’s abundant love. Let us go knowing that the Holy One goes with us wherever our journey takes us. Amen.*

**Closing Hymn - # 79 MV “Spirit, Open My Heart**