

**ZOOM Worship for, November 21, 2021
Reign of Christ Sunday**

Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississauga of the Credit First Nations. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Centering Music: “Shout, Shout” MV 183

I’m gonna shout, shout, shout out my love
for Jesus, for Jesus!

I’m gonna shout, shout, shout out my love
for God’s most holy child!

For whatever I might do today,
at home, at school, at work, at play,
I’ve got Jesus’ love deep down inside of me!

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

One: Alpha and Omega,

Two: *beginning and ending,*

One: king and servant,

Two: *teacher and learner,*

One: healer and Creator,

Two: *all names for the One who calls us.*

One: We gather in this virtual space and declare who God is for us,

Two: *who Jesus is with us, and who we are with him.*

One: We worship the One of many names,

Two: *we praise the Maker, the Kingly Son and the Spirit.*

One: Let us lift our hearts in prayer –

God of our seasons and our moments,
as the liturgical calendar comes to its annual end
and we prepare to welcome a new church year,
remind us that you are with us in all times.

Two: *Prepare in us a space for welcoming the Reign of Christ
in our time, in each of our spaces –*

*it is a time when your justice and love will be known,
it is time when we proclaim who Jesus is, and whose we are.*

One: Help us to seek wisdom, know compassion,
and do justice in Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen

Opening Hymn: “Rejoice the Lord is King” VU 213 verses 1 and 2

Rejoice the Lord is King!
Your risen Lord adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing
and triumph evermore.

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
rejoice; again I say, rejoice!

Jesus the Saviour reigns,
the God of truth and love;
when he had purged our sins,
he took his seat above.

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
rejoice; again I say, rejoice!

Prayer for Reflection and Revelation

“Reign of Christ” from Celebrate God’s Presence, United Church of Canada

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another’s will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the Earth’s abundance
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life’s creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

Sung Response: “Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ” MV 166

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Son of God among us,
thank you for every sign showing that you love us.

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Love of God among us,
thank you for every sign showing that you love us.

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Word made Flesh among us,
thank you for every sign showing that you love us.

Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Truth of God among us,
thank you for every sign showing that you love us.

Scripture Readings:

Revelation 1:4b – 8 *The Inclusive Bible*

Grace and peace to you, from the One who is, who was, and who is to come, from the seven spirits before the throne and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the Firstborn from the dead, sovereign of the rulers of the earth.

To Christ - who loves us, and who has freed us from our sins by the shedding of blood, and who has made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God and Creator - to Jesus Christ be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

Look! Christ is coming on the clouds
for every eye to see,
even those who pierced Jesus,
and the peoples of the earth
will mourn over Christ.
So be it! Amen.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega', says our God, "who is, who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

John 18:33-37 *The Inclusive Bible*

So Pilate re-entered the Praetorium and summoned Jesus. "Are you the King of the Jews?" asked Pilate. Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or have others told you about me?" Pilate replied, "Am I Jewish? It is your own people and the chief priests who hand you over to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My realm is not of this world; if it belonged to this world, my people would have fought to keep me out of the hands of the Temple Authorities. No, my realm is not of this world.'

Pilate said, "So you're a King?"

Jesus replied, "You say I'm a king. I was born and came into the world for one purpose - to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who seeks the truth hears my voice."

Choir: "Breath of God"

Reflection: "Do you have anything to declare?"

Hymn: "You Lord Are Both Lamb and Shepherd" VU 210

You, Lord, are both lamb and shepherd.
You, Lord, are both prince and slave.
You, peacemaker and sword-bringer
of the way you took and gave.
You, the everlasting instant;
you, whom we both scorn and crave.

Clothed in light upon the mountain,
stripped of might upon the cross,
shining in eternal glory,
beggared by a soldier's toss.
You, the everlasting instant;
you who are both gift and cost.

You, who walk each day beside us,
sit in power at God's side.

You, who preach a way that's narrow,
have a love that reaches wide.
You, the everlasting instant;
you, who are our pilgrim guide.

Worthy is our earthly Jesus!
Worthy is our cosmic Christ!
Worthy your defeat and victory.
Worthy still your peace and strife.
You, the everlasting instant;
you, who are our death and life.

Virtual Offering:

One: Imagine your hands stretching out beyond the doors of your home,
beyond the windows of your condo or apartment,
and into the world around.

Two: *Imagine your gifts to the church reaching out beyond your doors,
and entering into the lives of others as we declare our gratitude in what we share.*

One: Generous God, inspire us to offer what we have – our hands, our hearts,
and our treasures of time, money and talent.

Two: *Bless all the gifts we offer, bless each giver and those who receive,
we ask in the name of the One who is your gift to us, Jesus Christ. Amen*

Sung Response: “You are Holy” MV 45

You are holy, you show us the way (4x)
You show us, you show us,
You show us the way. (4x)

Prayers of the People:

One: Generous and Loving God, today we declare that we are yours,
that our hearts are grateful, that we are committed to following your way.

Two: *We bring thanks for cooler weather, and thanks for warm homes,
we say thank you for the warmth of this community and the life we share.*

One: We bring our thanks for the truth of your Living Word - the truth of Jesus,
and for the deep and abiding truth of your love.

Two: *We thank you for those who dare to declare truth in our time –
Indigenous leaders and climate change activists, our elders and our children.*

One: We say thank you for those who support your church in the community
and around the world, who declare with their skills and their dollars
that Jesus’ rule and way is worth sharing.

Two: *Compassionate and Caring God, we pray that your love will flow through us,
bringing life and hope to those in pain and need.*

One: We lift our prayers for those whose lives have been altered by flooding in British Columbia,
or political turmoil in Afghanistan, or by the continuing covid-19 pandemic.

Two: *We pray that hungry ones be fed, frightened ones find safety,
worried ones find calm, hurting ones find comfort.*

One: Help us to reach out with our hearts as well as our resources,
with prayers and with creativity to make a difference in this world.

*Two: we pray separately, but united by your love and grace,
naming our own needs as well as the needs of others.*

One: We lift our voices across our screens and across distances
in prayer and contemplation -

The Lord's Prayer A Paraphrase VU 916

Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be.
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: "I'm Gonna Live so God Can Use Me" VU 575

I'm gonna live so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna work so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna work so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna pray so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna pray so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna sing so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna sing so God can use me,
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Commissioning /Blessing

May God, who sang the universe into being, go with you.
May Christ, who is God's love song to the world, attend you.
May the Holy Spirit continue to sing God's love
into each and every heart, each and every day.

Musical Benediction: "When You Walk From Here" VU 298

When you walk from here,
when you walk from here,
walk with justice, walk with mercy,
and with God's humble care.

Reflection**"Do you have anything to declare?"**

Making a declaration is not unfamiliar to most of us. We make declarations when we do our taxes, are asked what we have to declare when we cross the border into Canada when we travel, and in this pandemic time in Ontario we are asked to declare our proof of vaccination if we want to eat in a restaurant, go to a movie, or attend a sporting event. We declare our finances, we declare our purchases, we declare our status, and all of those declarations are based on the truth.

How often, though, do we declare our faith in Jesus? How often do we proclaim who Jesus is for us? On this Reign of Christ Sunday, when we are also thinking about what we give to support the church, we are asked to contemplate a Jesus who is the ruler of our hearts, our minds, and our lives. What is true for us in the declarations we might make about him?

Pilate, we assume, was searching for some kind of truth as he questioned Jesus just hours before his death. If Jesus is being portrayed as a king in this passage, it would have been a ruler unrecognizable to Pilate. This is not the Jesus who stood clothed in brilliance on the mountaintop, nor the Jesus commanding the attention of the crowds or displaying his power over the legion of demons in the land of the Gerasenes. This is Jesus at possibly his physical and emotional low point - arrested, disheveled, harassed, hungry, abandoned, and sleep-deprived, without worldly influence or power. In this prelude to brokenness and loss, Jesus can still declare his purpose, his faith, his realm that is beyond what Pilate can understand.

For me, it is sometimes difficult to imagine Jesus as a king. My experience with that word brings up images of pampered and wealthy royalty living sometimes disconnected from the reality of those over whom they rule. I am more comfortable acknowledging the truth of Jesus as the healer, the teacher, the world-changer, the rebel, the One who God sent, who knows and cares deeply for all God's people. I imagine that those who encountered Jesus in his life felt such an overwhelming presence of God in him that they could declare without hesitation the truth of his power in their lives.

I think that is what we ultimately affirm when we declare Jesus as a king in our faith and in our lives – that his teaching, his presence, his purpose, his truth, his life and death and resurrection has power to change us, inspire us, and transform us. Declaring what we personally believe is Jesus' truth for us can inform decisions, can help us to open our hearts and minds to the vulnerable ones, can urge us to work actively for justice in our world. I invite you to take a moment now to ponder what you declare about Jesus, and perhaps think of a name, an aspect, that is important to you. You could write this

'declaration' on a sticky note to remind you over the next week, you could email it to a friend, or even to me.

While we think about what we each can truthfully proclaim about Jesus, and what impact that could have in our lives, we might also reflect on what we declare, what we are truly saying, through what and how we give to our community of faith.

There are many, many gifts shared in this church family. Some share their knowledge or experience, or their creativity, or their time, or their compassion. In such gifts, we declare our care for one another, and often our commitment to sharing worship, companionship, and lives of faith with one another. In our financial gifts, we may be declaring our gratitude for all that God has provided for us. Perhaps in those gifts we are stating our belief that church is important to us, or that the work we do is important or meaningful.

What does your offering mean to you? What do you want it to declare to the world?

As we travel through Advent, which begins next week, we will continue to spend some time together thinking about what we, as Christian community and Applewood United Church, can declare to each other, to our neighbours, and to the world.

Finally, I invite us all to share one of our denomination's declaration of faith, of what we dare to proclaim as God's people in this United Church – A New Creed.

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.