



SUMMERLAND UNITED CHURCH
celebrating faith
seeking justice and
serving others in a loving community

Sunday, March 21, 2021 ✨ 10 a.m.

A Joint Sunday Service for Summerland and Westbank United Churches
Judi Ritcey, Summerland United – Presiding
Judi Ritcey – PowerPoint – Summerland United



Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth

GATHERING TIME

9:45AM

INTRODUCTION

Judi Ritcey

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Judi Ritcey

As we gather together this morning those of us here in the Okanagan would like to respectfully acknowledge that the land on which we gather is on the traditional, unceded Sylix territory. We also acknowledge with respect the diverse histories and cultures of all the Peoples of this province. We welcome the opportunity to open hearts and minds to the past and make a commitment to contributing to a better future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELL RINGING

WORDS OF WELCOME

Charlotte Burley, Summerland United

A warm welcome to our friends from Summerland and Westbank United Churches who are with us today and to all those joining us from other locations. If there are any visitors today from other congregations or other places, we welcome you and thank you for joining us this morning. If you are comfortable, please unmute yourself and tell us where or what congregation you are from. Please remember to re-mute yourself.

MOMENT OF SILENCE TO VIEW THE CONGREGATION

Friends, we gather apart but together. I invite you now to switch to gallery view or scroll through your screen to witness the children of God gathered with us today.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE - The Gathering L/E

Peter Chynoweth, pg. 5 Used by Permission

It's Sunday morning. Last week, with all its demands is over.

The coming week, with yet another round of challenges and demands is not quite here.

I invite you to close your eyes and be in the moment. No matter where you are in your thoughts and feelings – relieved about what you have accomplished, anxious about what’s left undone, concerned about people or projects, no matter where you are in your journey this day.

I encourage you to set all that aside and consider where you are right now. Whatever is true for you – right now, in this moment, whether it be joy, or sadness, gratitude or anxiety, let it come forward.

When it is fully present, then listen - for God is present in these moments too. God meets you where you are and calls you forward, moment by moment, guiding you slowly but surely.

SILENCE: Light Candle

Loving God, we thank you that you are with us, and that we may call on you no matter where we are, or what we are feeling. Keep us mindful of your presence and trusting in your promise – that you are working with us in the moment by moment unfolding of our lives.

Amen

WE SING TOGETHER

Let Us Build A House – MV 1

CALL TO WORSHIP – The Gathering – LE 2021	Juanita Austen Pg. 4 – Used by Permission
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Gather in, dear ones, wherever you are this morning,
despite whatever doors are locked to keep you in or out,
we have found a way to be together.
We are not alone, we live in God’s world,
and as God’s people we make a sacred commitment
to open our hearts and minds to what word the Spirit might offer,
and to what nudging, what questions, what grace might be given in this time.
Please join in this time of worship.

OPENING PRAYER - The Gathering – LE 2021

Joy Cowan, Pg. 5 – Used by Permission

Gracious God, you are our sacred space within a swirling storm;
you are our source of calm amidst the chaos.
Help us become more aware of your constant, gentle presence.
We ask for your strength to sustain us, your love to replenish us,
and your peace to fulfill us.
In this hour of worship, in this time of pandemic, may we be reminded and reassured

that we are truly yours.

In the name of Jesus, the Risen One, we pray. Amen

WE SING TOGETHER

O For A World – VU 697

SCRIPTURE READING

John12: 20-33 - The Inclusive Bible
Lois Jefferis, Westbank United Church

REFLECTION

Judi Ritcey

MEDITATION

Together Through the Valley – Linnea Good

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Paul James - Summerland United

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Earth-maker: A modern 'Lord's Prayer' – Jim Cotter, UK

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 test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For your reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

This version of the Lord's Prayer was written by the late Reverend Jim Cotter, who came from the UK, and is included in The Prayer Book of The Anglican Church of New Zealand

For the love of the world,
Jesus offered everything he had, even life itself.
In response to this powerful gift of love,
let us offer our gifts and our lives to God,
as we share in our offering

PRAYER OF DEDICATION – The Gathering L/E

Gord Dunbar, pg. 6 – Used by Permission

They seem so little and the world is so big and so overwhelming right now,
yet we offer these gifts to you, O God.
Take what we offer and bless it for your mission of love.
In a world of conflict and pandemic, may these gifts, and we ourselves,
become agents of change and transformation, in Jesus' name of self-giving love. Amen.

WE SING TOGETHER

In the Bulb There Is A Flower – VU 703

BLESSING – The Gathering L/E

Wendy MacLean, pg. 7 – Used by Permission

In a world that is closed in, locked down, and distanced, be a sign of hope and love.
Let your faith lead you into a life that blesses the world.
Dare to trust that God's goodness is not at a distance, but in each breath.
Go now, knowing that God goes before you and calls you to come.
Beside you is Christ, our teacher, our healer, our friend.
Surrounding you like light, like breath, is the Spirit.
Go in peace, and serve God, today and each day. Amen.

CHAT ROOMS

March 21 - Rural & Homeless – Gary’s Story

Through your gifts, Mission & Service helps support those who struggle in rural areas, where poverty can be hard to spot.

Gary* is a senior citizen living in Ingleside, Ontario, a village of 1,300 people. He lives alone, and is in poor health. He tries to keep warm by heating his house with wood. That’s fine – until he runs out. Gary doesn’t have a driver’s license so can’t access social services in the city. Thankfully, a few months ago, his doctor referred him to the House of Lazarus, a Mission & Service supported community outreach that offers food, clothing, and household goods to those in need.



In rural communities, homelessness can be even more hidden.

Credit: Trisha Elliott / The United Church of Canada

“Gary would have starved or frozen to death without House of Lazarus intervening and getting him food and wood. But long-term solutions for people without cars are challenging because they have no way to access services in larger Centres,” says Rev. Dan Hayward, the minister at Ingleside-Newington United Church where the House of Lazarus just opened a satellite location last August. “There’s a rural homelessness issue here that few people would think exists,” says Hayward.

In rural communities, poverty can be hard to spot. There, people rarely ask for money on the street. There are no downtown cores to gather in and few, if any shelters, to turn to. Lack of public transit and nearby resources means that, too often, people suffer alone.

“We first saw the problem when we began delivering firewood. One person put a wood stove into an old camper to stay warm. It was definitely not safe,” says Cathy Ashby, the House of Lazarus Executive Director. Women are particularly impacted. “We know they stay in abusive situations because there is no affordable housing or emergency shelters in the area. We found a single mother and her two teenage daughters sleeping in a tent well into November. It’s challenging. Politicians are not going to put money into an issue that they don’t see.”

Increasingly, the House of Lazarus is reaching out into the community rather than waiting for people to come to them. Mission & Service support helps provide community meals and breakfast programs off-site. Through Operation Backpack, highlighted in this year’s Gifts with Vision catalogue, 170 students receive food in their backpack every Friday to help them through the weekend.

“The United Church is definitely a strong supporter. We have had Seeds of Hope grant funding, been highlighted in Gifts with Vision, and receive regular Mission & Service support. We are grateful,” says Ashby. Your gifts through Mission & Service help transform lives in rural and urban centers across our country. Thank you.

**Gary’s name has been changed to protect his privacy.*