

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

*We recognize that the land where we gather for worship belongs to God, as does all of creation, and that the Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ – have lived on this land since before settlers of European descent claimed ownership and displaced those for whom it was home.*

***As we pursue our goals to dismantle racism and attend to growing diversity, we lament this injustice in our history and commit ourselves to just and respectful relationships within our congregation and our neighborhood.***

A service in scripture and song...<sup>1</sup>

*The meaning of the title Christ or Messiah is “king”, literally “the anointed one” – the one anointed to be king. But Jesus was mocked with a crown of thorns, a gaudy robe and a reed for a sceptre, while the soldiers jeered. We believe that after he rose and met with his disciples, he was honoured by being raised to the highest place with God. Today we celebrate “Reign of Christ” Sunday and the establishment of God’s kingdom when divine glory will be fully revealed. We focus on the cosmic character of Christ. This day can serve as a review of the life and work of Jesus and remind us who he is. Our service is a testimony that everything in creation and culture must yield to Christ. It is an invitation to each one of us to submit actively and joyfully to the absolute and unlimited rule of God.*

Call to Worship

➤ ***Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel (verse 1)*** **122**

† Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Creating God, we come before you this morning aware that we belong to you.

**We rejoice in your creation.**

Redeeming God, we come before you this morning blessed that you gave your Son in love for us.

**We rejoice in your love.**

Sustaining God, we come before you this morning inspired by your Spirit that lives within us.

**We rejoice in your presence.**

Have mercy on us O God as we confess that we often ignore and abuse your creation.

**We admit that we do not live the love you have shown us.**

**We acknowledge our resistance to your presence in our lives and our relationships.**

Hear our silent confession also O God, as you heard the confession of the criminal on the cross...

Holy One, draw us together as a reconciled community so that we may worship you with our whole being, today and every day. We pray together with confident hope... ***Our Father, who art in heaven – hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come – thy will be done – on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen***

Words of Hope

The Lord alone grants us the grace to live the life of discipleship to which we are called. Accept the forgiveness of your sin – embrace the new life you have been given – giving thanks to God always.

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<sup>1</sup> This service is adapted from “Another Year is Dawning”, Reformed Worship, Sept. 2005, Number 77, p. 11

**The Prophecy**      Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7; 11: 1-5a, 10-11; 40: 1-5, 10-11; 7: 14-16

Reader 1:      The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from this time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. (Isa. 9:2, 6-7)

Reader 2:      A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt, and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (Isa. 11:1-5a, 10-11)

Reader 3:      Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: In the desert prepare the way for the Lord, make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. See, the sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. (Isa. 40:1-5, 10-11)

Reader 1:      The Lord himself will give you a sign: a virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel. (Isa. 7:14-16)

**Jesus' Coming**      Luke 2: 1-20

Reader 1:      About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem of Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

Reader 2:      While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

Reader 1:      There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them, and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said,

Reader 2: “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David’s town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you’re to look for, a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.”

Reader 1: At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God’s praises.

Reader 2: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

Reader 1: As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the sheep herders talked it over.

Reader 2: “Let’s get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.”

Reader 1: They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing! They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed.

Reader 2: Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within her. The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they’d been told!

➤ **Angels we have heard on high (verses 1-3) 147**

### **The Epiphany** Matthew 2: 1-18

Reader 1: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the East and have come to worship him.”

Reader 2: When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

Reader 3: “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.”

Reader 2: Then Herod sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

Reader 1: The star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. Having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Reader 3: The Christ Child is born! All you who would find him, prepare for a journey, as shown by the Magi.

Reader 1: All you who would praise him, come with the faith to follow his star.

Reader 2: All you who would worship him, come with humility to the child King.

Reader 3: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done.

Reader 1: The Magi who study the heavens follow a guiding star!

Reader 2: Christ revealed in the flesh.

Reader 1: Christ revealed in the spirit.

Reader 3: Christ revealed to us!

Reader 2: The Son who is the Word, reveals his Father's plan.

Reader 3: Come! Let us worship the King!

➤ ***As with gladness men of old (verses 1, 4, 5)*** **172**

***Jesus' Baptism*** Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22; John 1:19, 23, 26-27, 29-34

Reader 1: Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:13-17)

Reader 2: The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:15-16, 21-22)

Reader 3: Now this is John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.' I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the One I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." (John 1:19, 23, 26-27, 29-34)

➤ ***Out of deep, unordered water (verse 1)*** **515**

## **Jesus' Transfiguration**

Luke 9: 23-36; 1 Peter 1: 16-19

Reader 1: Then Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came out from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and told no one at that time what they had seen. (Luke 9:23-36)

Reader 2: (Peter later had this testimony.) We were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises to your hearts. (1 Pet. 1:16-19)

➤ ***We have come at Christ's own bidding (verse 1) 187***

## **Jesus' Passion**

Psalms 118; Zechariah 9: 9; Matthew 21: 8-11; 26: 36-42, 47

Reader 1: Open for me the gates of righteousness;

Reader 2: I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.

Reader 1: This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter.

Reader 2: I will give you thanks, for you answered me. You have become my salvation.

Reader 1: The stone which the builders rejected has become the capstone.

Reader 2: The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Reader 1: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Reader 2: From the house of the Lord we bless you.

Reader 1: With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession.

Reader 2: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Reader 1: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Reader 2: Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!

Reader 1: See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Reader 2: A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

Reader 1: "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Reader 2: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Reader 1: "Hosanna in the highest!"

Reader 2: When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this!"

Reader 1: The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Reader 3: But Jesus knew that his hour was near in which he would give his life. Only a few days later Jesus took his disciples into the garden of Gethsemane to pray. He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them,

Reader 4: "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Reader 3: Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed,

Reader 4: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Reader 3: Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.

Reader 4: "Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked.

Reader 3: He went away a second time and prayed,

Reader 4: "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

Reader 3: While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

➤ ***Jesus, remember me (repeat)***

**206**

***Jesus' Trial and Death***      Matthew 26: 50, 57, 59, 60-68

Reader 1: Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Reader 2: Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. Finally, two came forward and declared,

Reader 3: "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days."

Reader 2: Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus,

Reader 1: "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?"

Reader 2: But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him,

Reader 1: "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Reader 4: "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Reader 2: Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,

Reader 1: "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

Reader 3: "He is worthy of death," they answered.

Reader 2: Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

➤ ***What wondrous love is this (verse 1)*** **242**

Matthew 27: 12-14, 24, 27-31

Reader 1: When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him,

Reader 2: "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?"

Reader 1: But Jesus made no reply, not a single charge. When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said,

Reader 2: "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your responsibility!"

Reader 1: Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him.

Reader 3: "Hail, king of the Jews!" they cried.

Reader 1: They spit on him and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. Then they led him away to crucify him.

➤ ***What wondrous love is this (verse 2)*** **242**

Matthew 27: 45-46, 50-52, 54

Reader 2: From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

Reader 4: “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” — which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

Reader 1: At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed,

Reader 3: “Surely this was the Son of God!”

➤ ***What wondrous love is this (verse 3)*** **242**

#### † Offering and Prayer

On the Sunday of Reign of Christ, we declare our love and loyalty to Jesus by the gift of our praise and the offering of our lives. Let your gifts this day proclaim your commitment to him as our Lord and our friend.

➤ ***Praise God from whom all blessings flow*** **306**

**Almighty God, you rule in this world through your love. Receive our gifts as tokens of our love for you. Bless and multiply them through the power of the Spirit, so that they will spread your love in ways we have yet to imagine. Amen**

#### † Pastoral Prayers

Holy One, the Source, Story and Spirit of Love, we praise you for the signs of your reign among us – for hope overcoming despair – trust rising above hurt – love prevailing over hatred – and peace restoring harmony after discord.

God of Hope Beyond Fear, we pray that you will comfort this broken world. May the vision of your peaceable kingdom take root – in your church, in our families, in our community, and in countries marked by violence and struggles for power.

God of Wholeness Beyond Fracture, we pray for a world where differences are overcome by understanding, and everyone can find a place of dignity and respect. Shape our hearts soft with the kindness of your Spirit so that all our relationships honour your image in each person, and our actions and attitudes help you mend the world you love.

God of Life Beyond Death, we pray for all those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, the loss of hope or the loss of a dream. Be present with each one living through a time of sadness or discouragement. Bring them comfort through your presence, and show us how to be good companions on the journey to renewed hope.

As we honour Christ, the only King and head of the church, we pray for the continuation of Christ’s ministry through the church. We have faced many challenging months, separated by the pandemic and the divisions it has created among us. Send your Holy Spirit to knit the church together – bring renewed life and commitment to each congregation and parish – enliven ecumenical action on needs in every community – open minds and hearts that have experienced disagreement to mutual understanding – and refresh all who are tired out with a vision of the future you will create for us, with us and through us, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen



## **Jesus' Resurrection and Commission**

Matthew 28: 1-2, 5-10; Mark 16: 12; Matthew 28: 16-20

Reader 1: After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb he rolled back the stone and sat on it. The angel said to the women,

Reader 3: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; he is risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

Reader 2: So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them.

Reader 4: "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.

Reader 1: Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country.

Reader 2: Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said:

Reader 4: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

➤ **Jesus Christ is risen today (verses 1 and 2) 243**

**Jesus' Ascension** from Acts 1, Luke 24, Ephesians 1 and *Our World Belongs to God*

*[Please listen to the readers, and then join in the responsive selection that follows.]*

Reader 1: After his suffering, Jesus showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Reader 2: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Reader 1: When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, and suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

Reader 2: "Men of Galilee," they said. "Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Reader 1: Christ, the God of Glory, has been given all power and authority through the love of his Father who raised him from the dead and set him on the heavenly throne.

Reader 2: He placed Christ Jesus in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule.

Reader 1: And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything.

Reader 2: At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

*Where is Jesus now?"*

***Jesus ascended in triumph to his heavenly throne.***

***There he hears our prayers, pleads our cause before God, and rules the world.***

*"I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord.*

***May Christ's rising lift our spirits and gladden our hearts.***

*"I am seated on my Father's right hand, the place of honor and glory."*

***All who believe in Christ will never perish.***

*"In my Father's house are many mansions."*

***May Christ's resurrection bring us peace, hope, and joy.***

*"I go to prepare a place for you."*

***Christ welcomes us. Alleluia! Amen***

➤ ***Rejoice, the Lord is King (verse 1)***

***267***