



April 21, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Easter
Earth Sunday

Gower Street United Church is a safe place for all people to worship regardless of race, creed, age, ability, cultural background, or sexual orientation.



We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we live, work and worship as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has been lost forever and can never be recovered. We also acknowledge the island of Kaimuki (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut. We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come. As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. As we open our hearts and minds to the past, we commit ourselves to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

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Bold indicates unison.
Rise in body and spirit as you prefer.
The projected text in white is a communal response.

**Today's bulletin is dedicated in loving memory
of Grandparents from Lloyd & Roberta Gill.**

THE SPIRIT GATHERS US IN

The Life and Work of Gower

Voluntary

We sing: VU 409 Morning Has Broken

Busessan

Words of Welcome:

No matter who you are, where you come from, how you come to be here, what you believe or what you are questioning, you are welcome in fullness.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

As we gather, we are thankful for your light in all of Creation:

**for light and darkness; for air, wind, and sky; for earth and sea;
for seeds, harvests, and plant life; for sunlight, moonlight, and starlight; for every living
creature, swarming, flying, creeping, and grazing; for our lives.**

Through this light and in our actions, meditations, and prayers,
may we honor and celebrate your very good Creation, as we seek wisdom on how to share our
gratitude and love in good and healing ways. **Hallelujah! Amen.**

Gathering Words:

We are one flock, we are called to be one in community. **We have boldness before God because
we know we are loved and known
and so, in the same, way let us love each other, siblings and cousins, not only in word or
speech but in truth and action—let us join together as one flock to worship the one God.
Amen.**

Gathering Prayer:

Holy One, Heart of Creation, you know us and call us into bold service.

**We come together this day to celebrate your creation, the beautiful streams that surround us
and provide us with food and water, and that are often the centre of our communities.**

We come to hear hard stories of where our still waters have been lost, communities broken.

**Open our hearts to hear the cries of our family, of partners in Canada and abroad so that we
may be empowered to act in love for one another.**

For you are our shepherd, who leads us toward green pastures. **Amen.**

We sing: VU 307 Touch the Earth Lightly

Prayer for Transformation:

Holy One, we are blessed to live in a land of plentiful natural resources.

We are blessed to have rules of law that protect our human dignity.

We recognize that these blessings are not extended to others,

we recognize that our privilege allows us to exploit others.

We recognize that, in this country and overseas,

harvesting has allowed us to reap the rewards of natural resources while also harming your creation and fracturing communities.

We recognize the harm caused by our want for more. Heal us in our desire for ever more resources; forgive those times when we do not speak up against injustice, and embolden us to be agents of your change in this world. For the building of the kin-dom, Amen.

Assurance of God's forgiveness:

Scripture assures us, God is our Shepherd, we shall not want (Psalm 23). "Whenever our hearts condemn us...God is greater than our hearts, and...knows everything" (1 John 3:20). As a shepherd cares for scattered sheep, our God cares, forgives us, and calls us into community. Members of the one flock—we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

LISTENING TO THE STORY

Sung Invitation for Illumination: MV 97 Listen God is Calling Traditional: Tanzania

A reading from the Epistle: Acts 4:5-12 Christina Wells

A reading from the Gospel: John 10:11-1

Sung Response: VU 958 Halle, Halle, Halle Caribbean

Anthem: In Christ Alone

Circle Song

Circle Time

Sharing our Special Places in Nature

We sing: Saltwater Joys

Meditation

COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND SHARING GOD'S LOVE THROUGH OUR MINISTRY

The offering plates are located near the sanctuary doors. You are invited to place your offerings there when you arrive or leave. You can also scan the QR code on our bulletin to donate via our website.

Moderator's Earth Week Message 2024

Gathering our Gifts:

You are invited at this time to consider the multiple ways that you can give to the life, work, and ministry of this church and the wider church for the sake and love of creation. We often think of our treasures as our monetary contributions. Your generous giving to Mission and Service helps to give Kenyan farmers the knowledge and support they need to replenish infertile soil and get higher and more sustainable crop yields through partners like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

We sing: VU 541 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow Old 100th

Offering Prayer:

Gracious God of the Sparrow, the whale and the creeping, crawling creature, on this Earth Day, we

ask that you would bless our offerings. **With their use enable us to discern the best way forward as good stewards of the earth. Help us to truly understand the blessings we have received from the earth and use them wisely. May your kin-dom come. Amen.**

Prayers for the World and the Prayer of Jesus

Response: God of Creation

Together, we are stronger.

WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD

A Celebration of Nature in Pictures and Music

We go out into the world:

As we experience each tree, each flower, each bird, each bee, and each human,
let us feel our God reflected in creation.

As we look upon God's world,
let us share the love of Jesus.

As we love one another,
may your Spirit give us the strength we need to care for each and every part of creation.
Hallelujah! Amen!

Threefold Amen: VU 967

Danish

Postlude

Worship today was inspired by Gathering, Lent/Easter 2024, Year B.

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