

Bethel United Church
March 29 2026



Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Bethel United Church in Rideau Ferry Ontario. Today is March 29, 2026 and it is Palm Sunday. Wave your banners my friends, today is a day of great celebration. My name is Rev. Lynne Gardiner and I am pleased to welcome all of you into this place of worship, whether you are worshipping with us virtually, or in person.

This week, our service is being led by: Paula Grenke and our choir, Aidan Williamson, Kathleen Williamson, and Paul Kehoe.

A quick reminder of our regularly scheduled Bethel activities: Chat and Chew, in person and in the hall on Tuesdays at 1:30 and our Zoom Prayer and Share on Thursdays at 10am.

We are gearing up to Holy Week and Easter. This year we will be having a Good Friday "*Stations of the Cross*" service on April 3rd at 3pm. This is timed so that those who are helping with the Pancake Breakfast set-up the same day can be part of this quiet and contemplative worship time. Which means that yes, we have a Pancake Breakfast on April 4th from 8am until noon.

Lenten Project Week Six

Today you are invited to donate to the Hospice Hub through loose change on the offering plate or by a cheque or e-transfer to Bethel United Church. (please mark Hospice Hub on the memo line).

On this final Sunday of our Lenten Project, a word about Hospice Hub volunteers...

Volunteers are fundamental to the hospice hub. They are part of a compassionate community caring for each other.

Volunteers provide hospice and bereavement services, advocate for hospice, fundraise, lead workshops and raise awareness through community events.

A 30+ hour training period is mandatory for Home Support and Bereavement Support volunteers who serve Hospice Hub clients directly. It is also highly encouraged for Organizational Volunteers even if they are not serving clients.

Volunteer training is offered at regular intervals.

For more information about the Hospice Hub and its programs, please go to <https://www.thehospicehub.ca/>

Thank you for your interest in and support for this important community organization.

Bethel's Annual Pancake Breakfast will take place next Saturday, April 4th from 8a.m until 11a.m. (Set-up is Friday afternoon from 1 - 3 p.m.)

Come out and enjoy fluffy pancakes and sausages topped with Oliver's Mapleworks delicious Maple Syrup.

It does take our entire Bethel Family to successfully carry out this important community event. Thank you so much to all who have already volunteered. Most of the lines on the sign-up sheet are now filled ...but if you haven't yet signed up and really want to assist, please speak to Karen after the service and she will find a role for you.

Your help is requested in getting the word out about the Breakfast.

Posters are available in the Hall. Please share them broadly and post them wherever you can. Also please forward your electronic copy of the poster to family, friends and any other community contacts.

Together we can make this breakfast happen once again ... and we will have a lot of fun along the way!

Any questions, please contact Karen or any member of the Stewardship Committee.

Are there any celebrations this week?

Please join in singing a brief song of celebration:

VU 958

"Halle, Halle, Halle"

Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Halle, halle, halle-lujah!

Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

(reproduced with permission under license # 610589 LicenSingOnline)

Land Acknowledgment (Unison)

For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples and acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.

Minute for Mission

Steady Presence on the Northern Landscape

In Fort Nelson, BC, where the landscape is vast and the seasons are bold, Hillcrest United Church has been a vibrant presence for more than 60 years. Rural ministry carries its own rhythm—shaped by distance, resilience, and close-knit relationships. At Hillcrest, that spirit is tangible. Worship blends cherished hymns with newer songs. Faith is lived not only in the sanctuary, but in everyday acts of care and connection.

As a rural church, Hillcrest plays an essential role in community life—offering pastoral presence, encouragement, and a welcoming space where everyone belongs. Accessible and intentionally inclusive, it reflects the strength and generosity that define rural communities across Canada.

Hillcrest offers points of connection beyond Sunday services, inviting the community to Christmas and Spring teas, garage sales, and events peppered throughout the year.

Through Mission and Service, Hillcrest is part of a wider movement of hope. From northern British Columbia, their generosity supports ministries across the country and around the world—and they, too, are strengthened by this shared experience.

Hillcrest reminds us that rural congregations are vital expressions of faith—grounded, resilient, and forward-looking.

When we give to Mission and Service, we are standing with rural communities like Hillcrest—sustaining ministry, nurturing connection, and helping vibrant congregations continue to flourish in every part of Canada.

Call to Worship (Responsive) *(Based on Matthew 21:1–11)*

Come, people of hope and courage. The Holy One comes among us, not in power or spectacle,
but in humility and peace.

We welcome the One who comes in the name of God.

We open our hearts to the way of peace.

Long ago the crowds gathered along the road,
spreading cloaks and branches before a humble rider.

They cried out with joy and longing:

"Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in God's name!"

Today we gather as they did—seeking hope, longing for justice,
ready to witness the presence of God among us.

Hosanna in the highest!

We welcome Christ into our lives, our community, and our world.

Let us worship the God who comes to us in humility, compassion, and love.

Let us worship together with open hearts. Hosanna! Amen.

Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle

As we light our Christ candle and our World candle this morning, we think about how we recognize God's presence in our lives. Do we need celebration and excitement in order to 'see' God? Or can we see God in the quieter moments of struggle?

Listen to God's words for you this morning from Matthew 21: 10

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Opening Prayer

Holy and welcoming God,

As the crowds once gathered along the road to Jerusalem,
we gather in this place with hope in our hearts.

We remember the day when Jesus entered the city in humility—
not with the power of armies or the wealth of kings,
but with the quiet strength of compassion and peace.

Stir our spirits as we worship today.

Open our eyes to the ways you move among us
in simple acts of courage, kindness, and justice.

Teach us to recognize your presence
not only in moments of celebration,
but also along the ordinary roads of our lives.

Like those who spread their cloaks and branches before him,
may we offer our lives in welcome—
ready to follow the path of humility,

ready to work for peace in a troubled world,
ready to join the chorus that still cries out, "Hosanna!"

May this time of worship renew our faith, strengthen our hope,
and guide us to live with love and integrity in the days ahead.

Amen.

Opening Hymn

VU 123

"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

- ¹ Hosanna, loud hosanna the happy children sang;
through pillared court and temple the joyful anthem rang;
to Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast,
the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.**
- ² From Olivet they followed 'mid an exultant crowd,
the victory palm branch waving, and singing clear and loud;
the Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,
content that little children should on his bidding wait.**
- ³ 'Hosanna in the highest!' That ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer; earth, let your anthems ring.
O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,
and in his humble presence eternally rejoice!**

(reproduced with permission under license # 610589 LicenSingOnline)

Passing of the Peace

Prayer for Reconciliation

Merciful and patient God,

You come to us in humility and peace,
yet we confess that we often look for power in louder places.
We celebrate you with our words,
but hesitate to follow you in our daily lives.

Like the crowd that shouted "Hosanna,"
we welcome hope when it is easy,
but turn away when the path leads toward sacrifice,
justice, or courage.

Forgive us when we overlook the quiet ways you enter our world—
in the needs of our neighbors,
in the cries for fairness and compassion,
in the invitation to live more faithfully.

Renew our hearts, O God.
Teach us to walk the road of humility and love.
Help us to welcome Christ not only with praise,
but with lives that reflect your mercy and grace.

In silence we offer the prayers of our hearts.
(silent prayer)

Amen.

Assurance of Love

Friends, hear the good news:
The God who comes to us in humility
also comes to us with boundless mercy.
In Jesus Christ we see that love is stronger than failure,
and grace is wider than our mistakes.
God meets us where we are, forgives us, restores us,
and calls us again to walk in the way of peace.
Therefore, receive this good news:
You are forgiven, you are loved, and you are made new.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Theme Conversation

Our Scriptures Today

Matthew 21: 1-11

Jesus enters Jerusalem

Psalms 118 (VU p. 837)

The Stone that the builders rejected.

Refrain Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Part One (1-4)

Let Israel now say:

'God's love endures for ever.'

Let the house of Aaron say:

'God's love endures for ever.'

Let those who fear God say:

'God's love endures for ever.' Refrain

Part Two (14-18)

God is my strength and my song; God has become my salvation.

There are shouts of joy and deliverance in the tents of the righteous.

The right hand of God does mighty things; the right hand of God raises up.

The right hand of God does mighty things.

I shall not die, but live; and I shall proclaim what God has done.

God indeed punished me, but did not give me over to death.

Refrain

Part Three (19-24)

Open to me the gates of the temple, that I may enter and give thanks to God.

This is the gate of God; through it the righteous shall enter.

I thank you for you have answered me; you have become my salvation.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is God's doing, marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day that God has made,

let us rejoice and be glad in it! Refrain

Part Four (25-29)

Save us, O God, we pray;

God, we pray, give us success.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.

We bless you from the house of God.

God, our God, has given us light;

with palm branches in hand let us march to the altar.

You are my God, and I will thank you;

you are my God, and I will extol you. Refrain

Reflection

Last Days

Hymn

VU 371

“Open My eyes, That I May See”

**1 Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.**

**Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

**2 Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.**

**Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

**3 Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.**

**Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

(reproduced with permission under license # 610589 LicenSingOnline)

Invitation to the Offering

Offering Music

Offering Response

VU 542

“We Give You But Your Own”

**We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.**

(reproduced with permission under license # 610589 LicenSingOnline)

Offering Prayer

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Loving and compassionate God,

As the crowds once gathered to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem,
we gather before you with our hopes, our concerns, and our prayers.

You come among us not with force or power,
but with humility, compassion, and peace.

Teach us to recognize your presence in our world today.

We pray for your church in every place.
Guide communities of faith to follow the way of Christ—
not seeking status or privilege, but living with humility, courage, and love.

We pray for the leaders of nations and communities.
Grant them wisdom, patience, and integrity.
Where there is conflict, inspire the work of peace.
Where there is injustice, awaken the will for change.

We pray for the world you love—
for places where fear and violence overshadow hope,
for communities burdened by poverty or disaster,
and for all who long for dignity and safety.

We pray for our neighbors and for one another.
Comfort those who grieve,
strengthen those who are weary,
heal those who are ill,
and encourage all who feel alone or discouraged.

We pray for the quiet needs we carry in our hearts today.
(pause for silent prayer)

God of grace,
help us not only to speak words of welcome, but to live them—
to prepare the way for peace, to walk the road of justice,
and to follow the humble path of Christ.

Today we have special prayers for:

Joy	Rev. Myra	Fran	Liz T.
Liam	Jim	Chris O.	Grace
Joanne	Bev	Leah	Lainey
Lorne	Kim	Amanda &	James
Abby	Pierre	Wayne T.	Bob
Janet	Dianne	Serge	Mel
Carol	Rae	Wayne P.	Brynnley

And as a community we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:
Our Father....

Closing Hymn VU 660 “How Firm a Foundation”

**¹ How firm a foundation, you servants of God,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent word!
What more can be said than to you has been said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?**

- 2 'Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed!
For I am your God and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen and help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous omnipotent hand.**
- 3 'When through the deep waters I call you to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
and sanctify to you your deepest distress.**
- 4 'When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply:
the flame shall not hurt you; I only design
your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.**
- 5 'The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not - I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never - no, never - no, never forsake!'**

(reproduced with permission under license # 610589 LicenSingOnline)

Living our Faith this Week

Where do you celebrate God's presence this morning? How can you live today in full celebration of the gift of your life?

Commissioning and Benediction

Sung Benediction

**Go now in peace, never be afraid,
God will go with you each hour of everyday.
Go now in faith, steadfast strong and true,
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching us in love.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. Amen. Amen. Amen**

(reproduced with permission under license # 610589 LicenSingOnline)