

Merlin Fletcher
United Church

Welcoming Service
Sunday July 14th, 2024



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United Church

Merlin Welcoming Fletcher
Service
July 14th, 2024 @ 2:30 pm

*Celebration of Ministry of Merlin
Fletcher United Church*

July 14th, 2024

Leaders: Rev Kim Gilliland, Eric Skillings,
Donna Pollard and Jim Stirling

Music: Ruth Haddock

Candle Lighters: Elwin Vince, Donna Pollard,
Rev Kim Gilliland, Betty Vince, Steven Vince,
John Lusina and Linda Vince

Bold Lettering: Please read along.

Offering: *“if you wish to make an offering today, the plate is on the back table” Thank – you!*

Prelude:

The Lantern, Cross and Bible are carried into Merlin United Church, followed by the Fletcher United Church Congregation, who may be seated on their journey, while singing the chorus of “Come In, Come In and Sit Down”.

VU 395: Chorus of “Come In, Come In and Sit Down”

*Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.*

People: With the light and the Cross, we take our sacred text, as it is the Word of God - our living story to be shared with all those that we meet. *(Rev Kim Gilliland (as the recent Minister) places the Bible on the Communion Table).*

People: With the light, we take the Cross; the sign of our salvation and promise of life beyond life. *(Elwin Vince (as Chair of the Board) places the cross on the Communion Table).*

People: We bring the Christ Candle, as it was placed in this lantern to take our ministry to our new space as the Fletcher United Church Congregation. *(Betty Vince (as Clerk of Session) places the lantern unto the Communion Table).*

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Betty will light the Christ Candle using the light in the lantern from Fletcher United Church. During the lighting we sing: VU 402: “We Are One As We Come”

We are one as we come,
as we come, joyful to be here,
in the praise on our lips
there's a sense that God is near.
We are one as we sing,
as we seek, we are found;
and we come needful of God's grace
as we meet, together in this place.

Passing of the Peace:

Eric: The peace of Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Eric: Let us welcome each other with the Peace of Christ.

Instead of actually getting up and Passing the Peace:

Merlin United Church: “Welcome, the peace of Christ be with you”.

Fletcher United Church: “Thank You, the peace of Christ be with you”.

Welcome & Announcements:

Eric: We celebrate with Merlin Fletcher United Churches today as they come together to create a combined Family of God. Today we honour the legacies of Fletcher United Church by bringing into the Merlin United Church building, the symbols of importance from the Fletcher United Church congregation. Together, we will help each other to do the work of Christ and ministry to our community. As we move forward into this new leg of our faith journey, we trust in the support of each other, as we work towards the kingdom of God.

Continuing our Journey:

Eric: For all things, there is a time, a time for all things under heaven. We also know that a grain of wheat must fall to the ground in order to grow. So too we answer the call of the Holy Spirit to plant us in our new space so that we may continue to grow in new and different ways together as one.

Kim: The Lord is with You.

People: And also with you

Kim: Take heart for you are not alone.

People: Within our hearts we know we are not alone, and we are able to set forward in faith.

Eric: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with

God. All things came into being through him, and without him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

Kim: Who we will be as a community of faith, will continue to shine in us - as a community of faith that loves and honours God as we work towards the coming of God's Kingdom.

People: May God guide our way.

People: We take the light of Christ, and light the candle of Community Actions of Fletcher United Church. The light of the Community Actions can never be extinguished. The Community Actions, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

Steven Vince: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and lights the sixth white candle).

People: We take the light of Christ, and light the candle of Comfort and Compassion of Fletcher United Church. The light of the Comfort and Compassion can never be extinguished. The Comfort and Compassion, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

Linda Vince: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and lights the fifth white candle).

People: We take the light of Christ, and light the candle of Fellowship and Outreach of Fletcher United Church. The light of the Fellowship and Outreach can never be extinguished. The Fellowship and Outreach, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

John Lusina: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and lights the fourth white candle).

People: We take the light of Christ, and light the candle of Children and Youth of Fletcher United Church. The light of the Children and Youth and their faith can never be extinguished. The faith of the Children and Youth, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

Steven Vince: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and lights the third white candle).

People: We take the light of Christ, and light the candle of Adult Groups of Fletcher United Church. The light of the Adult Groups and their purpose can never be extinguished. The purposes of the Adult Groups, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

Linda Vince: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and lights the second white candle).

People: We take the light of Christ, and light the candle of the music of Fletcher United Church. The light of the music can never be extinguished. The music and those musical gifts offered, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

Betty Vince: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and lights the first white candle).

People: We take the light of Christ and light the candle of the Sacraments – shared and received at Fletcher United Church. The light of the Sacraments can never be extinguished. The Sacraments and those sacred times, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

Rev Kim Gilliland: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and light the third red candle).

People: We take the light of Christ and light the candle of the Word of God preached at Fletcher United Church. The light of the Word of God can never be extinguished. The Word of God, and those whom shared it, burns within each of us and our collective memories.

Donna Pollard: (takes the light from the Christ Candle and lights the second red candle).

People: We take the light of Christ, and light the candle of the ancestors of Fletcher United Church. The light of our ancestors can never be extinguished. Their light burns within each of us and our collective memory.

Elwin Vince: (takes the light from the Christ candle and lights the first red candle).

Eric: May the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and strengthen you, as you begin the next leg of our journey of faith. May the Holy Trinity be your guide, inspire your imagination and enliven your faith - to be Easter People in the world. Thanks be to God.

Call to Worship:

Kim: In the name of God we welcome all who come to this place today to celebrate the ministry of welcome to the Fletcher United Church congregation.

People: We seek the God of righteousness and justice; who comes unfailing as the dawn, every morning

Kim: The Triune God who greets us in the morning, sustains us through the day and through the night, and into our certain future.

Merlin United Church: We welcome our sisters and brothers in Christ of Fletcher United Church to come in this building and make themselves at home, sharing this space, ministry and worship together as one.

Fletcher United Church: *We thank you for the warm welcome as we enter these doors to Merlin United Church. The Fletcher United Church congregation call on the name of God, for us to join together, to serve God with one accord and to journey together with God into our shared future in this space.*

Kim: Come let us gather together to worship God.

Opening Hymn: CH 429 “They’ll Know We Are...”

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:
*And they’ll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love,
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
And together we’ll spread the news that God is in our land:

*And they’ll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love,
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
And we’ll guard each man’s dignity

and save each man’s pride:

*And they’ll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love,
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

All praise to the father, from whom all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son,
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one:

*And they’ll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love,
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

Opening Prayer:

People: **Once more O God - we have come to find the quiet center in our life where we can be with you. You bring calm into our lives, when we still ourselves, to feel your Spirit’s presence. In this time of reflection, may we know your presence with us; a presence which that in all moments of life reminds us that you are the light that walks with us. In Christ Jesus, we come to this time of celebrating and remembering. Amen**

Sharing the Candle Stories of the Journey:

Elwin Vince: From God, in Christ, through the action of the Holy Spirit, the ancestors of the Fletcher community came together to form the first Fletcher Presbyterian Church and in 1925, Fletcher United Church. We lit this candle to honour the Ancestors of Fletcher United Church. We bring these ancestors with us to our new Church home, as we remember along with the Merlin United Church congregation.

Elwin Vince: (extinguishes the first red candle)

Donna Pollard: The Word of God has been proclaimed at Fletcher United Church over the past 141 years. We celebrate how the teachings of Christ have been illuminated and shared with those with ears to hear. We remember those ministers, lay leaders and guests, who shared the Good News with the faithful of Fletcher United Church throughout the years. We bring the Word of God with us to our new Church home, as we worship with Merlin United Church congregation.

Donna Pollard: (extinguishes the second red candle)

Rev Kim Gilliland: We give thanks for all the times we have come to the table of the Lord to celebrate the blessed gift of the Sacrament of Communion. We remember the sacrament of Baptisms, where we celebrate the fullness of God - where we are claimed, called and commissioned. We celebrate the many marriages, our covenant with each other and with God. We celebrate our sacraments, renewing our faith, knowing Christ's presence in a most sacred moment. We bring the Sacraments with us to our new Church home, as we share sacraments with Merlin United Church congregation.

Rev Kim Gilliland: (extinguishes the third red candle)

Betty Vince: We celebrate those who answered God's Call to the Ministry of Music at Fletcher United Church; for the organists, the pianists, the choirs – adult and children. We appreciate their gifts shared each Sunday, at special concerts, caroling, solos and special music, as well as those who played instruments and directed the ensembles. Their musical talents are the Ministry of Christ among us at Fletcher United Church. We offer our appreciation for the gifts of these ministries. We

bring the gift of music with us to our new Church home, as we create and share music with Merlin United Church congregation.

Betty Vince: (extinguishes the first white candle)

Linda Vince: We celebrate and rejoice with the many Adult Groups at Fletcher United Church over these many years. We remember the Women's Missionary Society, the United Church Women, the organized Bible Study groups, the AOTS ("As One Who Serves") Men's Group that meet together with the wider community. Thank you for those groups that enabled us to share our faith with one another. We bring the Adult Faith Formation with us to our new Church home, as we gather in groups with Merlin United Church congregation.

Linda Vince: (extinguishes the second white candle)

Steven Vince: We offer praise and thanksgiving for times we have come together as a community of faith to witness and commit our support to children and adults as they begin and continue their faith journey through Sunday School, Young People's Union, Vacation Bible School, Christmas Pageants, and leading in worship. We celebrate our children and youth and their faith throughout the years of Fletcher United Church. We bring the Faith Formation of our children and youth with us to our new Church home, as we gather our youth and children together with Merlin United Church congregation.

Steven Vince: (extinguishes the third white candle)

John Lusina: We remember and celebrate the many times we have gathered around the tables, sharing potlucks, Beef Dinners, Muffin Parties, Bake Sales, Strawberry Suppers, to name a few of the acts of serving and sharing meals. We give thanks for all the times we have been able to extend outreach into the community serving God. We bring our acts of serving and sharing with us to our new Church home, as we serve with Merlin United Church congregation.

John Lusina: (extinguishes the fourth white candle)

Linda Vince: We remember all those moments when we have been comforted in the dark moments of our grief. We are grateful that we as a community of faith have been able to gather to offer comfort for those whom are grieving. As a Rural Community of Faith, we gather with the community to offer support to the grieving families and friends. We offer the Church Sanctuary for the Funeral Service, followed by a Community Lunch in the basement, to share our love, support and faith to the family. We bring the support and comfort with us to our new Church home, as we offer support and comfort with Merlin United Church congregation.

Linda Vince: (extinguishes the fifth white candle)

Steven Vince: We give thanks for those times we have gathered to witness our faith with the wider Fletcher Community; offering Hay Rides, Baby and Wedding Showers, Weiner Roasts, and a Gathering Place for the community to meet. We give thanks that we have been able to share this building with the community for so many years. We are proud that so many people in our wider community considered this Church to be their faith community. We bring the sharing of Community with us to our new Church home, as we will share Community with Merlin United Church congregation.

Steven Vince: (extinguishes the sixth white candle)

Eric: We offer these stories to honour, remember and celebrate the 141 years of Ministry at Fletcher United Church. It is in the light of Christ, strengthened by God's love, inspired by the Holy Spirit that we can honour who we are; in faith, in community and as servants in Christ. From the day forward, these stories and the stories of Merlin United Church will be our combined story. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: CH 572: Blessed Assurance"

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,

born of the Spirit, washed in Christ's blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight!
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending, bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blessed;
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Declaration of Welcome:

Mary Cooper: Today we have gathered to formally welcome our sisters and brothers of Fletcher United Church, to share this building in ministry together with Merlin United Church. Welcome home!

Donna Pollard: Today we have taken the incredible, yet heart breaking journey - from our beloved church building where we celebrated over 141 years of Ministry. Today we thank you for the invitation and welcome to share ministry in this common

place. May this place offer both congregations the ministry of God's Word and Sacraments.

Mary Cooper: May this building be for you - refuge and comfort for God's people. It has served as our household of faith. It is fitting, therefore, that we share it with our sister church congregation. Thanks be to God.

Donna Pollard: We lift up our hearts in thanksgiving for the many years of future ministry in this common place. Thanks be to God.

Blessing by Antler River Watershed Region:

Jim Stirling: *as the Antler River Watershed Regional Representative, I bring greetings and blessings from your Regional Council. We are so pleased that you have discerned a future together as one. We offer our blessing and support to your "nesting" and sharing ministry in new ways. The United Church of Canada in Merlin and Fletcher is in good hands as your congregations continue to be the church in the wider community. May God bless you and your ministries!*

Prayer of Going Forward:

People: O God, in your great goodness, you have blessed the many ministries carried on by both Merlin and Fletcher congregations. We pray that, now and in the days and years to come, you may greatly bless the many ministries of Merlin and Fletcher United Churches as they share a common space. Bless those persons who worship as one, in this building. As disciples of the risen Christ, may we be channels at all times of your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Closing Hymn: CH 3 "Holy, Holy, Holy. Lord God..."

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth
and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Blessing:

People: We are called towards the future as the combined Congregations of Merlin and Fletcher United Church.

Kim: In life, in death, in life beyond death, we are not alone.

People: Thanks be to God

List of Shared Past Ministers

Rev. Sidney Davison	1925 – 1927
Rev. Joseph Jones	1927 – 1931
Rev. George C. Mitchell	1931 – 1935
Rev. Harry B. Parnaby	1935 – 1941
Rev. Arthur E. Doan	1941 – 1949
Rev. W. Gray Rivers	1949 – 1951
Rev A. S. Trueblood	1951 – 1958
Rev. E.A. Poulter	1958 – 1959
Rev. L. H. Turner	1959 – 1963
Rev. Colin B. Grassie	1963 – 1967
Rev. O. R. Flindall	1967 – 1968
Rev. W. E. Aldworth	1968 – 1972
Rev. H. E. J. Moorhouse	1972 – 1979
Rev. Bruce Guy	1979 – 1983
Rev. Harley Moore	1983 – 1988
Rev. J. L. Vernon Bell	1988 – 1990
Rev. Lloyd Coates	1990 – 1996
Rev Dr. Henry Marissen	1996 – 2006
Rev. Lloyd Brown	2006 – 2007
Rev. Bruce Fraser	2007 – 2013
Rev. Jim Haupt	2014 – 2019
Rev. Colin Swan	2019 – 2023
Rev. Kim Gilliland	2023 – 2024