

Applewood United Church
An Affirming Community
Sunday, April 26, 2026
Fourth Sunday of Easter
*(*please stand in body or in spirit)*
Bold words are for all to share

Music for Gathering

Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements

We understand that the land on which we live, work and worship is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The territory is mutually covered by the "Dish with One Spoon" Wampum Belt agreement. In the spirit of reconciliation, we commit to building relationships with all created beings, those who were here before, those who have settled, and those who continue to settle on this land. We commit to partnering with our Indigenous neighbours in being stewards and caretakers of God's Creation. Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we seek to live as reconciled people through our respect for, and our learning and understanding of, our Indigenous siblings.

Centering Music: "Where Two or Three Are Gathered" MV 14

*** Call to Worship and Opening Prayer:** *(responsive)*

One: We gather this morning to worship God.

**All: We gather as individuals, as families,
but come together as community.**

One: We offer radical welcome as we assemble,

All: We work to open our doors and hearts to all.

One: We share the value of radical hospitality and belonging.

All: We yearn to include all who enter our worship.

One: Let us pray together
as we lift our voices and hearts to God this day.

**All: Sacred Source of life abundant,
we come to this time of worship
just as your people have come to you
throughout history:
questioning and replying,
searching and finding,**

hurting and healing,
lost and found.

Be with us as we journey with you in this brief time,
remind us that you are with us in all life's moments,
and wish for us a life abundant.

We pray in the name of the One who
provides that life –

Jesus the teacher, the companion, the Risen One.
Amen.

* **Opening Hymn:** "Come In, Come In and Sit Down" VU 395

Prayer for Reflection and Revelation:

"The Gate" by Dave Hopwood, adapted

One: I am the gate, whoever comes through me will find life.
Others come to take and to steal,

Two: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
Others come to hurt and manipulate,

One: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
Others come with fake news and alternative truth,

Two: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
Others will lead you down dark alleys and dead ends,

One: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
Others come with their own distorted version of truth,

Two: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
Others come with their own twisted take on justice and compassion,

One: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
Others come pedalling damaging lies and deceit,

Two: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
Others are only in it for themselves,

One: I have come to bring you life, and life in abundance.
I am the gate, whoever comes through me will find life.

One: Holy God, give us discerning hearts and minds,
give us the wisdom to know when you are speaking through
the voices and lives that surround us.

Two: Forgive us when we cannot hear,
forgive us when we are distracted by other paths,

forgive us when we think only of what is best for us personally.

Joanne: Hear us as we name in our hearts those times and circumstances when we have put ourselves ahead of others, when we have kept distant from you, God.

time of silence for personal confession

We know, deep within, that you ultimately offer
forgiveness and life in abundance, and a path to follow.
No matter where we are, you are there.
No matter what we have done, you forgive.
No matter our reluctance to accept you, you have accepted us.
With that assurance, receive forgiveness,
and live in fullness and in hope. Amen.

Musical Response: "And On This Path" MV 8

Scripture readings:

Psalm 23 (sung) VU 747

Acts 2:42-47 (*The Inclusive Bible*)

John 10:1-10 (*The Inclusive Bible*)

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

Choir: "Tender Shepherd, El Shaddai"

Reflection: Gated communities

***Hymn:** "Are You a Shepherd?" MV 126

Invitation to the Offering

Offering of Music: "The Lord is My Strength and Song"

Hymn of Dedication: "Behold, Behold!" MV 115

Offering Prayer (*together*):

All: Caring God,

**may we offer not only our material gifts,
but our whole selves to you,
and to all those who need our support
to feel welcomed and feel they belong.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
our teacher, healer, shepherd and Savior. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer (solo)

*** Closing Hymn: "We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky" MV 143**

***Commissioning/Benediction**

***Sung Amen**

Music for Scattering